

ANOTHER STUPID DECISION: WCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HIRES PIPER!



INSIDE WRESTLING

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CLUTCH ON
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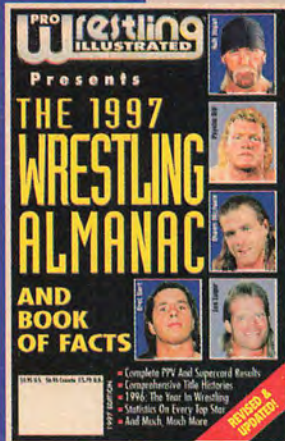
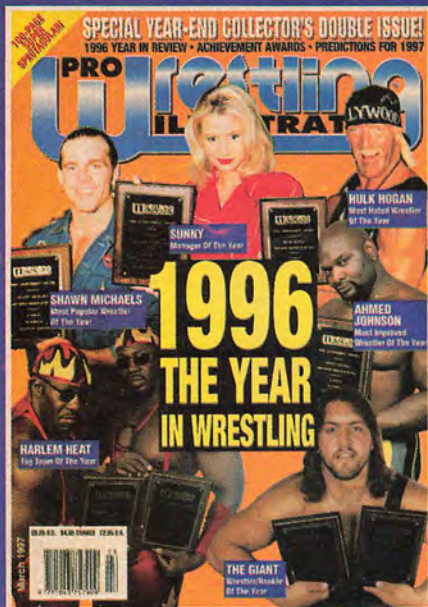
From Sable
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FOR THE
STARS!

January 1998

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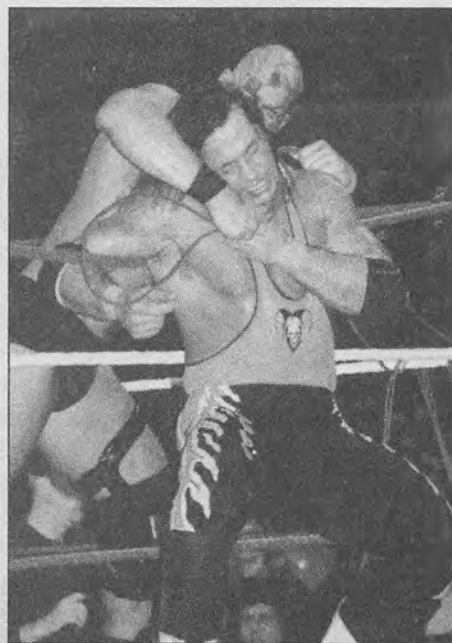
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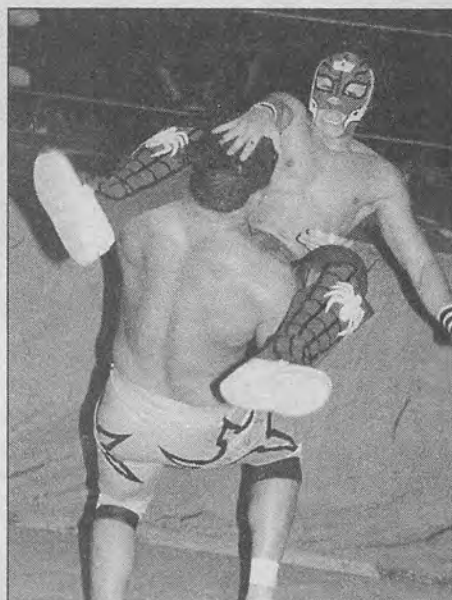
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Next issue on sale
December 23, 1997

Sincerely Yours

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DECIPHERING DILLON

I must be missing something. J.J. Dillon offers Sting contracts to wrestle Curt Hennig and Syxx, both of which Sting tears up. When Dillon asks Sting what he wants, the fans chant Hulk Hogan's name in unison and Sting holds up a large poster from a fan that reads "Sting vs. Hulk." Dillon stares right at the sign and appears genuinely dumbfounded. Dillon, as if he doesn't have a

It took J.J. Dillon a long time to figure out that the only way he would get Sting to wrestle again would be if he guaranteed him a match with Hulk Hogan. Reader David Miller thought that was obvious from the start.

clue, then issues Sting an ultimatum: Sting has until the Clash of the Champions to verbalize what he wants, because J.J. is quite obviously deaf and blind. Sting shows up at the Clash, interrupting a lengthy filibuster by "Hoan's Zeroes."

A child's voice is heard reciting a poem, and the child makes Raven sound coherent in comparison. Eerie music is accompanied by the presence of a vulture perched on the top rope, which unsettles the Hogan-less NWO.

The next week on *Nitro*, the broadcast team unanimously agrees that Sting made his intentions clear at the Clash. J.J. Dillon says that even though Sting did not say so in words, his actions at the Clash spoke volumes about his intentions, and he will now attempt to sign a match between Hogan and Sting.

Did I miss something here? What exactly did Sting make clear at the Clash? Let me get this straight: J.J. can't understand a sign that says "Sting vs. Hogan" in



big, black letters, but he can decipher weird music, obscure verse from a little kid, and an ugly bird into meaning that Sting wants a match with Hogan.

I just don't understand wrestling anymore.

DAVID MILLER
Oaktown, IN

FLIPPING CHANNELS

I have always been a WWF fan, but I recently flipped on *WCW Monday Nitro* for a while. After viewing it, I can't understand what all the fuss is about. I got bored after the first half-hour and couldn't wait for *Raw* to start. All anyone could talk about was the New World Order and that WCW is "where the big boys play." I was so relieved when *Raw* started. I finally could watch good action without the interruptions.

CHRIS JOHNSON
Uniontown, PA



If Bret Hart wrestles Goldust on the WWF's *Raw Is War*, chances are reader Chris Johnson, who doesn't care for *Nitro* at all, will be watching.

KING OF THE HILL

I have always been a staunch supporter of the WWF, but I think it's time for its wrestlers to think about what is really going on with these interederation struggles ("WWF War Zone! Interederation



The interederation feud between Tommy Dreamer and Jerry Lawler has spilled over into the WWF on occasion. Reader Karen Keller doesn't think the WWF should showcase wrestlers from smaller promotions on its telecasts.

Battles Rock The Sport!" November 1997). The WWF has a lot to lose by lowering itself to jousting with federations that are regionalized or are below world title status. Instead of fighting off the peasants, the WWF should be putting all its efforts into battling the king, WCW, which is looking down from the top of the wrestling hill at the squabbles going on.

KAREN KELLER
Richmond, VA

NWO 4 NOW?

While Hulk Hogan continues to make B-movies and mingle with personalities like Dennis Rodman, the WCW World title continues to collect dust and be neglected. Granted, new WCW chief J.J. Dillon has taken some steps to rectify this problem by trying to enforce the 30-day title defense rule. However, before Dillon stepped in, Hogan's few ring appearances were marred by losses to Roddy Piper, Lex Luger, and Jacques Rougeau.

(Continued on page 52)

Inside Wrestling

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Founder

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COVER DESIGN:

Alex Krasnopolsky

COVER PHOTOS:

Sable by Bill Apter

Roddy Piper by Bill Apter

INSIDE WRESTLING, Volume 30, Number 1, (ISSN: 1047-9562) is published monthly, with an additional issue in December, by London Publishing Co., 7002 W. Butler Pike, Ambler, PA 19002. Periodicals postage paid at Ambler, PA 19002 and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: INSIDE WRESTLING, P.O. Box 910, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Single copy price \$2.50 (\$3.50 in Canada, £1.95 in U.K.). Subscription price \$29.20 for 13 issues in the U.S., \$39.60 in remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. **FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES:** (215) 643-6385. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable News Inc., 11 West 42nd St., New York, NY 10036. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010. U.K. distribution by Comag, Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.

Printed in U.S.A.

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Stu Saks

Back to the question of whether or not the London Publishing family of wrestling magazines should recognize ECW's claim to a *world* heavyweight title: In my September '97 "Notebook," I threw out the question to the readers and got a pretty good response.

Sixty-two percent of those who wrote in felt that we should grant world title recognition to the ECW heavyweight championship. Those results didn't surprise me, considering the same conclusion was reached in the 1997 "PWI Poll" (51 percent yes, 44 percent no, 5 percent undecided). Mind you, we weren't putting the issue to a vote. It's important, though, to gauge the feelings of our readership whenever we make decisions that could impact the sport for years to come.

Here is a sampling of the letters I received:

From Alex Williams, Liberty, Missouri: "You at *Inside Wrestling* are definitely being stubborn in not recognizing this organization's long overdue world title claim. You ask how many ECW wrestlers would jump to the WWF or WCW? Try none. How many couldn't win in ECW, so they moved on?"

From Mike Oppenheim, Long Beach, New York: "The people at your family of magazines are right in not giving ECW world title status. I live in New York, and I can see ECW TV shows, and I'm impressed, but with the loss of Raven, Richards, and maybe Van Dam and Sabu, can they succeed? Is ECW more than a fad? I hope so, but you shouldn't rush into the topic. ECW must a) guarantee that Sabu, Taz, and others cannot and will not sell out, b) get its TV show on across the entire nation, c) steal a few big names from WWF, WCW, or Japan, d) promote more cards outside the Northeast and try to have cards in big arenas."

From Chris Bridges, Oxford, Georgia: "I am in favor of granting ECW's champion the title of World champion. I believe the time is overdue. Your magazines have a right to be cautious ... However, I don't believe there is any denying that ECW is one of the big three promotions in the United States ... It is unfair to compare ECW with the old UWF or World Class or Continental Championship Wrestling. ECW has proven it is here to stay."

So apparently is the debate over its title status.

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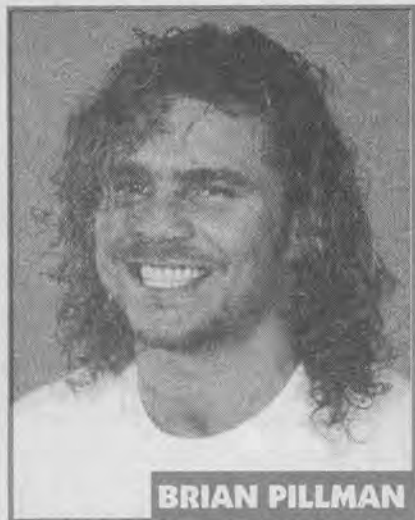
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NAMES MA

I'M SURE EVERYONE knows of the passing of **Brian Pillman**. He was found dead in his hotel room in Bloomington, Minnesota, on October 5. Although autopsy reports were not available as of press time, even WWF head **Vince McMahon** speculated on the air that drugs may have played a part in his death.

Melanie Pillman, Brian's wife, told me she last heard from her husband just before midnight on October 4. "He called me, but I was in the shower," she said, "so he left a message on the machine telling me he was going to bed. The next day, the WWF called to let me know he hadn't shown up for the [Badd Blood] pay-per-view, and the next thing I knew, the police came to my door and told me the news.

"The children and I will miss him so much. He was a wonderful father. But I never got to tell him that I'm pregnant [with Brian's sixth child]."

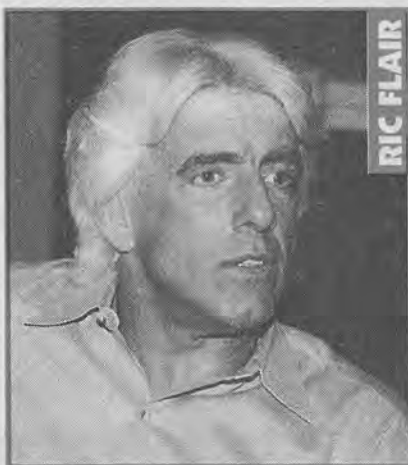


BRIAN PILLMAN

I knew Brian for about 10 years. The first few years I found him to be a very mellow person. As the years progressed and he encountered horrible personal problems with his relationships and from various injuries,

his personality changed, perhaps due to the medication he was taking to help ease those problems. I can best sum this up by saying that his nickname, the "Loose Cannon," really fit him. He was a troubled person.

Ric Flair said on TV that he was temporarily breaking up **The Four Horsemen**, but now he tells me it



RIC FLAIR

could very well be permanent.

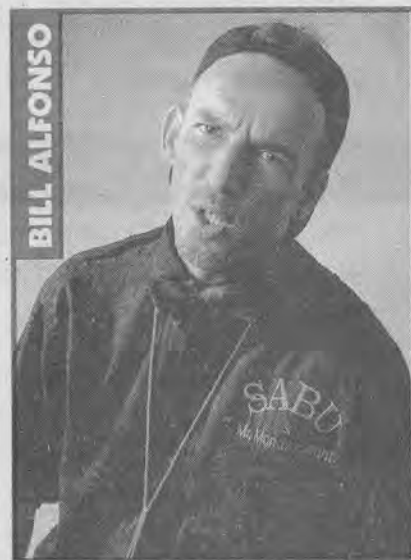
"When I was sidelined and home for a few weeks, I gave the Horsemen subject lots of thought," Flair said. "Without 'The Enforcer' [**Arn Anderson**], the whole thing just doesn't feel right anymore.

"I told **Steve McMichael** and **Chris Benoit** they were better off on their own. They deserve to pursue their own greatness. They don't need to get involved in my business anymore. It's just not fair to them. Now the 'Nature Boy' is on his own. The glory days of the Horsemen are a thing of the past, and maybe that's a good thing."

The NWO is still trying to figure out what to do about their WCW World tag team belts now that both **Kevin Nash** (torn knee ligaments) and **Scott Hall** (bad back) will be unable to defend them for a while. "Let **J.J. Dillon** try to take the belts

away, and we'll have him in court the next day," warned **Eric Bischoff**. "If we go to court, those belts will be tied up in litigation for years. Get the message, J.J.? *Maybe* we'll have some of our other guys defend them in Hall and Nash's place. But there is no way for WCW to get the belts from us in the ring or in court. You lose again!"

Bill Alfonso needed 16 stitches to close the gash on his head that was opened by **Beulah McGillicutty** during a match in which she and **Tommy Dreamer** wrestled Alfonso and **Rob Van Dam**. Beulah also executed a terrific "Frankensteiner" on Alfonso before pinning



BILL ALFONSO

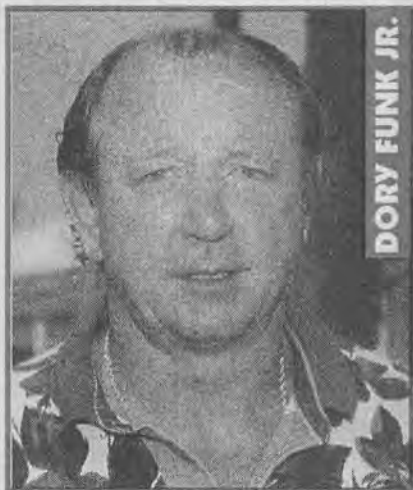
him ... Get-well wishes go out to WCW referee **Mark Curtis**, who underwent surgery for stomach cancer in late-September. If you want to send him a note, just address it to me in care of **INSIDE WRESTLING** and I'll forward it to him.

Lots of title changes in Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling, all on the same date, September 26, in Reading, Pennsylvania: **Ace Darling** won the Americas title from

KIN' NEWS

By Bill Apter

Bart Gunn, Col. Jihad Hussein and Dave Patera beat **Mike Quackenbush** and **Pat Shamrock** for the tag team belts. And the junior heavyweight title now belongs to **Joe Rules** (the number 500 wrestler in this year's "PWI 500"), as he won a battle royal to take the gold ... Because veteran **Dory Funk Jr.** was recently able to upset Rob Van Dam



DORY FUNK JR.

on an ECW card in Florida, he was granted a shot at ECW heavyweight champion **Shane Douglas** and nearly beat him. Douglas was uncharacteristically gracious afterward, as he shook Funk's hand back in the dressing room and said, "Tonight, I wrestled a real wrestler. It was a pleasure!"

WCW TV champion **Disco Inferno** tells me that he has made **Jacquelyn** even madder by offering her a job as his manager. "Me wrestling that chick would be a mistake," Disco said. "She should know a woman's place is behind a great man like me. So I e-mailed her a proposal to manage me. Man, the e-mail she sent back to me—I never would have believed she'd say something that disgusting."

Masato Tanaka has won the

Frontier Martial Arts brass knuckles and independent heavyweight title from **The Gladiator** ... Pennsylvania's Grande Wrestling Alliance fans are witnessing some brutal lumberjack strap death matches between **Ron Starr** and **Rolling Thunder** ... Some bloody strap matches between **Shane Cortez** and **The Original Renegade** have also been headlining Oklahoma Pro Wrestling cards.



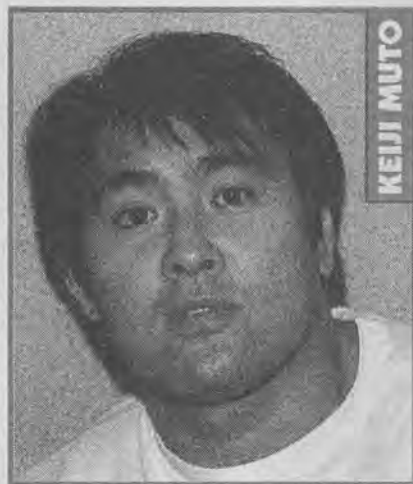
BRUNO SAMMARTINO

Bruno Sammartino is scheduled to do color commentary for several WWWA cards on which the main event will be **Nikolai Volkoff** vs. **George "The Animal" Steele** ... **Debbie Combs** and **Robbie Rage** are feuding in New Dimension Wrestling ... **The Pittsburgh Steel Team** is feuding with **Tony DiVito** and **King Kaluha** in the USWF.

Insiders are wondering just how long the team of **Big Van Vader** and **The Patriot** will exist. I asked both of them about their long-term plans, and received two very different answers. "I don't need no one, and I have no friends," Vader said. "The Patriot and I have a common goal, and that's getting rid of **The Hart**

Foundation. After that's completed, maybe we'll beat each other's brains in again!"

Said The Patriot: "I feel very good about this team, and I truly hope we can remain together. As much as Vader doesn't want to admit it, I think he likes the cheers of the fans, and I think that will change his opinion of our team in the near future" ... **Yokozuna** is wrestling in independent organizations in California and has had several meetings with WWF officials regarding a comeback there ... **Brian Adias**, who wrestled regularly for World Class Championship Wrestling in the 1980s but retired a few years ago and said he'd never return to wrestling, is back. He is competing for Texas' CWA and is being managed by **Gen. Skandor Akbar**.



KEIJI MUTO

Keiji Muto and Japan's NWO leader, **Masa Chono**, have patched up their differences. They had a few problems that almost forced them to come to blows in a Tokyo dressing room, but whatever the problem was, both assure us everything is fine now.

That's all for now. I'll see you at the matches! □

HE SAT ON the shore of the Gulf of Mexico thinking about the recent past, pondering how wrong he had been, and wondering how many other things he had been wrong about, too. That is the curse of being a father: You hope your children make the right decisions, and part of that is hoping that you're helping your children make the right decisions. How is anybody supposed to know? Rocky Johnson couldn't quite figure that out.

"I had always taught my son to look out for himself and do the right thing," Johnson said while sipping from a glass of iced tea and biting into a grilled chicken sandwich. "I'd like to think I taught him right. But then he goes

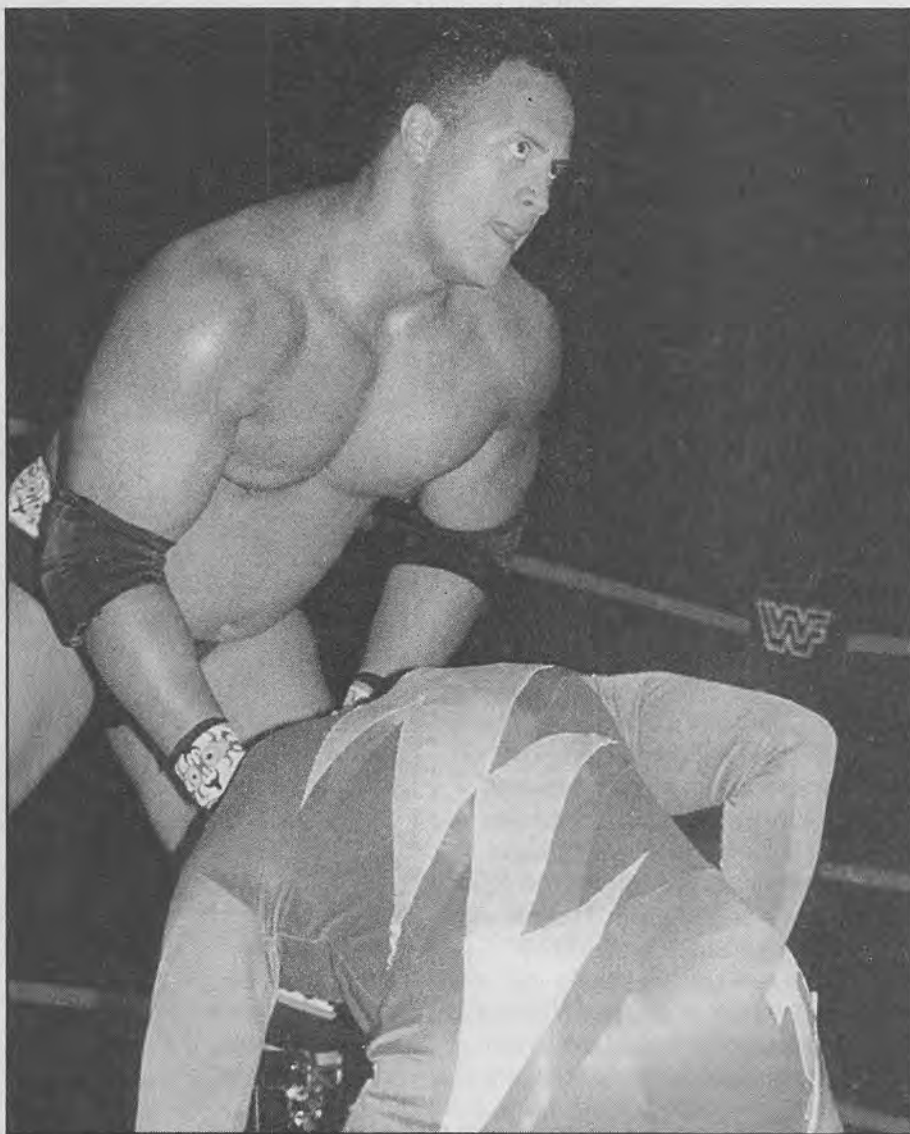
ON THE ROAD

With Dave Lenker

out and does something, and you're not happy with what he's done, even though you should know in your heart that you've taught him to make the right decisions. This time, I was wrong and he was right, but how was I supposed to know?"

This isn't a story about a father's heartbreak and a son's wrong turn, although that's how it looked at the start. In fact, the part about the wrong turn might still be correct, because it was in early-October that Faarooq was reportedly considering disbanding the Nation of Domination.

Rocky Maivia, Johnson's son, is a member of the Nation of Domination, and that's what this is all about.



If Rocky Maivia needs help beating Flash Funk, he knows other members of the Nation of Domination can provide it. His father, Rocky Johnson, finally came to the conclusion that his son made the right decision in joining.

"I didn't think it was the right thing for my son," Johnson said. "First of all, I always wanted him to play by the rules and not take shortcuts, and I didn't think he had to depend on anybody else to help him. I mean, when I was a wrestler, they had some of these groups or cliques or whatever you want to call them, and I didn't like any of them. In every one, you have one guy at the top, and then all the rest, and the only one who really benefits from the group is the guy at the top. I knew Rocky wasn't going to be at the top—at least not at the start—so what was the point of joining?"

"He told me, 'Dad, I'm making the right move,' and still I didn't believe him. We were talking on the phone that day, so I said, 'Son, why don't you come home for a few days and we'll hash this thing out, just to be sure you're making the right decision. What's the harm?' So he agreed."

Johnson's eyes glazed over as he continued telling the story. He stared out at the turquoise Gulf—a beautiful sight if there ever was

(Continued on page 54)

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Behind the Dressing Room Door

by David Rosenbaum

KEVIN HAD PROMISED that he would be the survivor, and that's what made this all so tragic, because now it's looking like he was exactly right. David, Kerry, Mike, Chris, and Jackie. All his brothers, all now dead, three from committing suicide, one from

acute enteritis (an intestinal inflammation), and the other from accidental electrocution. When Chris died, Kevin insisted that he had no intention of joining his brothers and was going to keep on living. It wasn't going to be easy, but that's what he planned on doing—living.

But on September 10, the Von Erich family shrunk by one again, when Fritz Von Erich, Kevin's father, died of cancer at his home in Lake Dallas, Texas. And now wrestling's most famous family is down to two: mother Doris, who divorced Fritz in 1992, and Kevin.

"Yeah, there are times when I'm lonely," Kevin said. "Even though my wife and children are a wonderful support cushion for me, I still miss the presence of David, Kerry, Mike, and Chris. I'd be lying if I said this has been easy. It hasn't been. It's the toughest thing anybody could ever go through, losing the people you love, but you try to go on. Now my father is

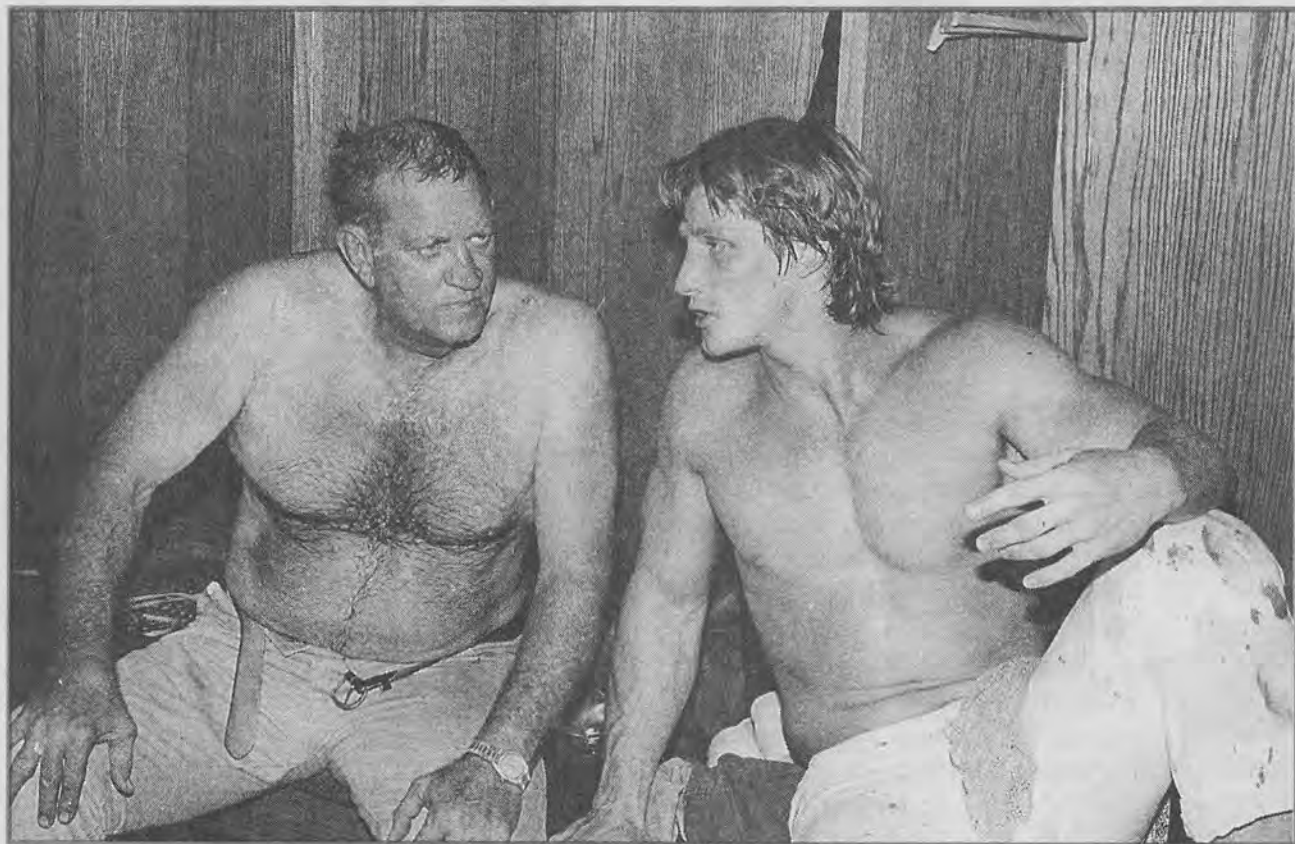
gone, too, and it's hard."

Doctors first discovered cancer in Fritz' lungs in late-July. Shortly afterward, they found that it had spread to his brain and adrenal glands. Somehow, Kevin retained hope.

"I know it's amazing, considering how bad things have turned out for my family in the past, but I really tried to hope for the best and hope that everything would turn out okay," Kevin said. "I don't know if that says more about faith or about the strength of my father. I mean, he was always seemed so tough, so invincible. I mean, he had to try to stay strong when all of my brothers died. Then he died. I still can't believe he's gone."

"That's the strangest part of all this. Death doesn't prepare you for more death, even though I guess that's what you'd like it to do. All of my brothers dying, it didn't make my father's passing any easier to take. He was a rock. You're never

(Continued on page 55)



Fritz and Kevin Von Erich share a moment together in a dressing room in the spring of 1984. His father's death hit Kevin hard. He has had to deal with too many tragedies in his life.

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the Insider

by Brandi Mankiewicz

(The opinions expressed in this column are those of Brandi Mankiewicz alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of anyone else on the staff of this magazine.)

I WILL PULL no punches. I hate Salt Lake City. Surrounding myself with a gaggle of Osmond-loving puritans is almost enough to turn my long, lustrous red hair gray. I was already a tad crabby

Disco Inferno fever is spreading in WCW, especially now that he has captured his first title in the federation. I can't believe other reporters aren't recognizing him as the superstar that he is.

from listening to all the whiners calling the office with complaints about this year's "PWI 500" and the ranking of their favorite wrestler, so I figured a break from the grind would do me good. But why can't WCW hold *Nitro* in the Bahamas once in a while?

One other incentive for visiting yawning Utah was that I would get to cover the WCW TV title match between Alex Wright and my personal fave, Disco Inferno. As I stood backstage early in the show, I saw Disco pacing. Well, it wasn't pacing. He was incorporating a few hip shakes and finger points.

As his music began to play, he started toward the ramp that leads to the ring, but before he got there, he passed a note to me. My heart leaped as I almost dropped my professional demeanor. As Disco's music played in the background and the mixture of boos and cheers rained down, I opened the note. It was a crudely put together press release fashioned from what seemed to be an old manual typewriter.

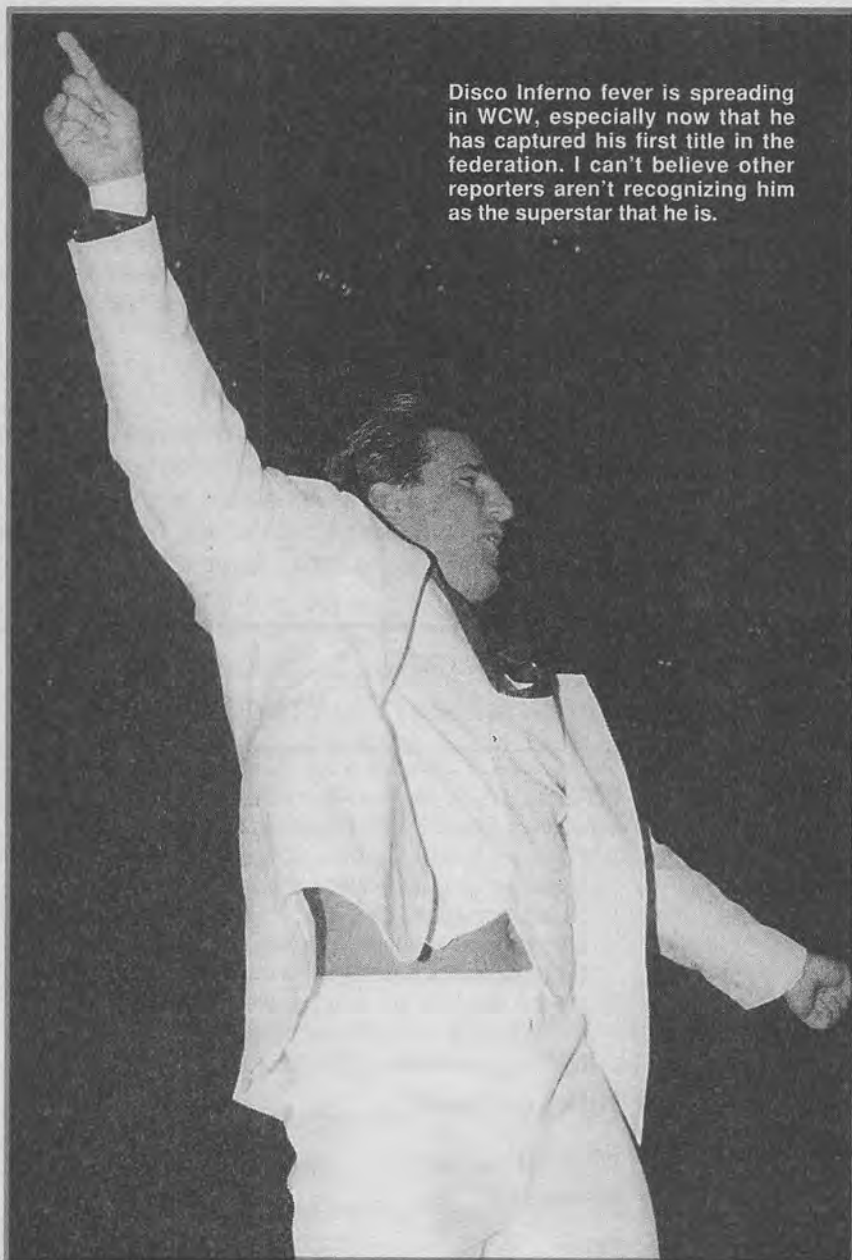
"The new WCW TV champion, Disco Inferno, will be conducting a press conference following his victory over Alex Wright in his dressing room. All press are invited to attend."

I looked around the backstage area. Other journalists were milling about, snapping pictures and collecting quotes. I also noticed crumpled pieces of paper on the ground. The refuse was the same color of my makeshift press release. I picked a few up. Yep, Disco's announcement, every one of them. I was the only one who took it seriously.

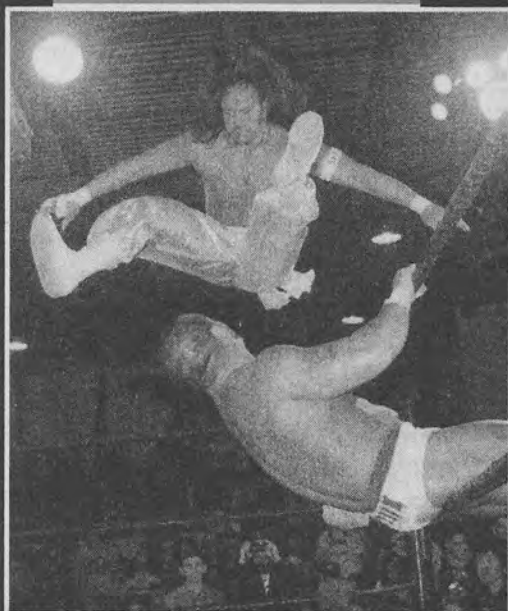
I stayed true to the man clad in polyester. I have always loved the well-coiffed wonder. I was thrilled when he returned to the bright lights of WCW after a six-month banishment to the land of indies and Internet speculation. Would I attend the press conference? What do *you* think?

I will always remember where I

(Continued on page 56)



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ON Assignment

By Liz Hunter

YOU MIGHT NOT remember this, there was actually a time in recent wrestling history when a live televised wrestling show was something special, a unpredictable evening that was met with great anticipation. Now it's just a weekly grind. But an interesting issue has arisen from this. It's an issue that is foremost on the minds of wrestling fans around the world and one that almost all wrestling fans could not have cared less about as recently as two years ago.

Ratings.

No matter what the subject of a TV show is, ratings are key to its success. But the awareness level by the average wrestling fan of the

WWF and WCW's weekly ratings has increased at an almost frightening rate recently.

The ratings watch started when *WCW Monday Nitro* made its debut on Labor Day 1995. With the WWF's *Monday Night Raw* (and previously, *Prime Time Wrestling*) monopolizing Monday nights for years, ratings were never an issue. But along came some competition, and suddenly people started to get interested. At first, many of the experts, including people like me, wouldn't give *Nitro* even a slight chance of supplanting *Raw* as the wrestling show to watch on Monday nights.

We all know how the story has

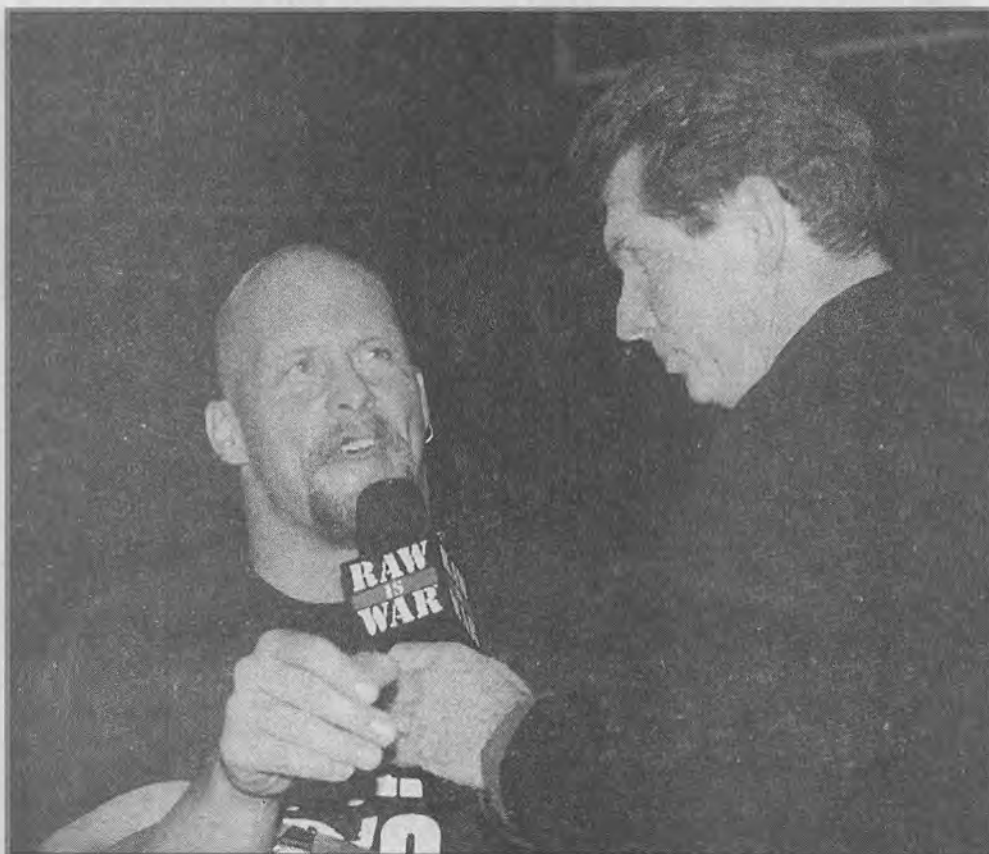
evolved. Slowly, through the novelty and unpredictability of live broadcasts, WCW has overtaken the sometimes-live *Raw*. The ratings battle has taken many bizarre twists and turns. On a few occasions, WCW has expanded *Nitro* to three hours, most likely so that the WWF's second hour, which usually goes unchallenged, had some competition. Come January, WCW will begin airing a live show on Thursday nights as well.

But what has evolved from all this is this strange fascination fans now have with ratings. People with wrestling sites on the Internet practically trip over each other to report the overnight ratings for the Monday night programs first. But that's not even the end of it.

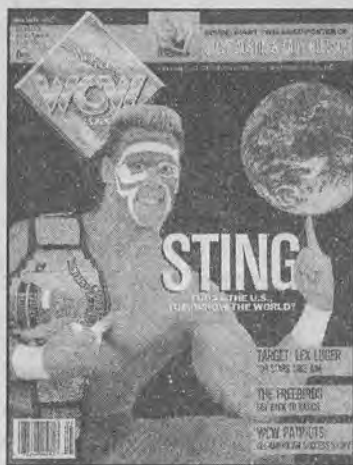
Not only do they compare the numbers of each show, but they also break each show down into quarter-hours and look at the numbers for each segment. And that's still not the end of it. They also look at what aired in each quarter hour on each show to determine which wrestlers or matches drew the most viewers. Exhausting to read? Yes. But it does provide a unique insight into the habits of Joe Wrestling Fan.

Usually, when Steve Austin is on the screen, ratings for *Raw* shoot up. If the Godwinns are battling Rockabilly and Jesse James, ratings hardly register.

(Continued on page 57)



Vince McMahon is interviewing Steve Austin again—you can almost picture the *Nitro* viewers changing channels. The quarter-hours of *Raw* on which he appears usually do well.



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Collectors agree that the early issues of WCW MAGAZINE were some of the most superb wrestling magazines ever published. Until recently, these magazines had been neatly stored in an air-controlled warehouse. Now, once again, they are available to the public!

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INSIDE WRESTLING CAPSULE PROFILE ²⁶²

BIG VAN VADER

SO VADER'S A fan favorite again? Don't tell him that. He says he's just as ruthless as ever. He insists he doesn't care that people cheer for him, but he seems more inspired now than he did a few months ago ... Former guard/center for the NFL's Los Angeles Rams began training for a wrestling career with Brad Rheingans in 1985 and made his AWA debut as the "Baby Bull" (*"Don't ever call Vader a baby!"*) ... Became the first American to win the Catch Wrestling Association title when he beat Otto Wanz in 1986 ... Was a champion on three continents simultaneously when he held the IWGP, CWA, and UWA title in 1991 (*"A real world champion!"*) ... Won the IWGP tag team title with Bam Bam Bigelow in 1992 ... That same year, he made his debut in WCW and signed with manager Harley Race ... Initiated a feud with Sting by cracking two of his ribs and bruising his spleen with a power bomb (*"He still feels that pain!"*) ... Used a power bomb to finish off Sting and win the WCW World title three months later ... Lost the belt to Ron Simmons three weeks later and grew even angrier. He went on to seriously injure Nikita Koloff and preliminary foe Joe Thurman in subsequent matches (*"They got*

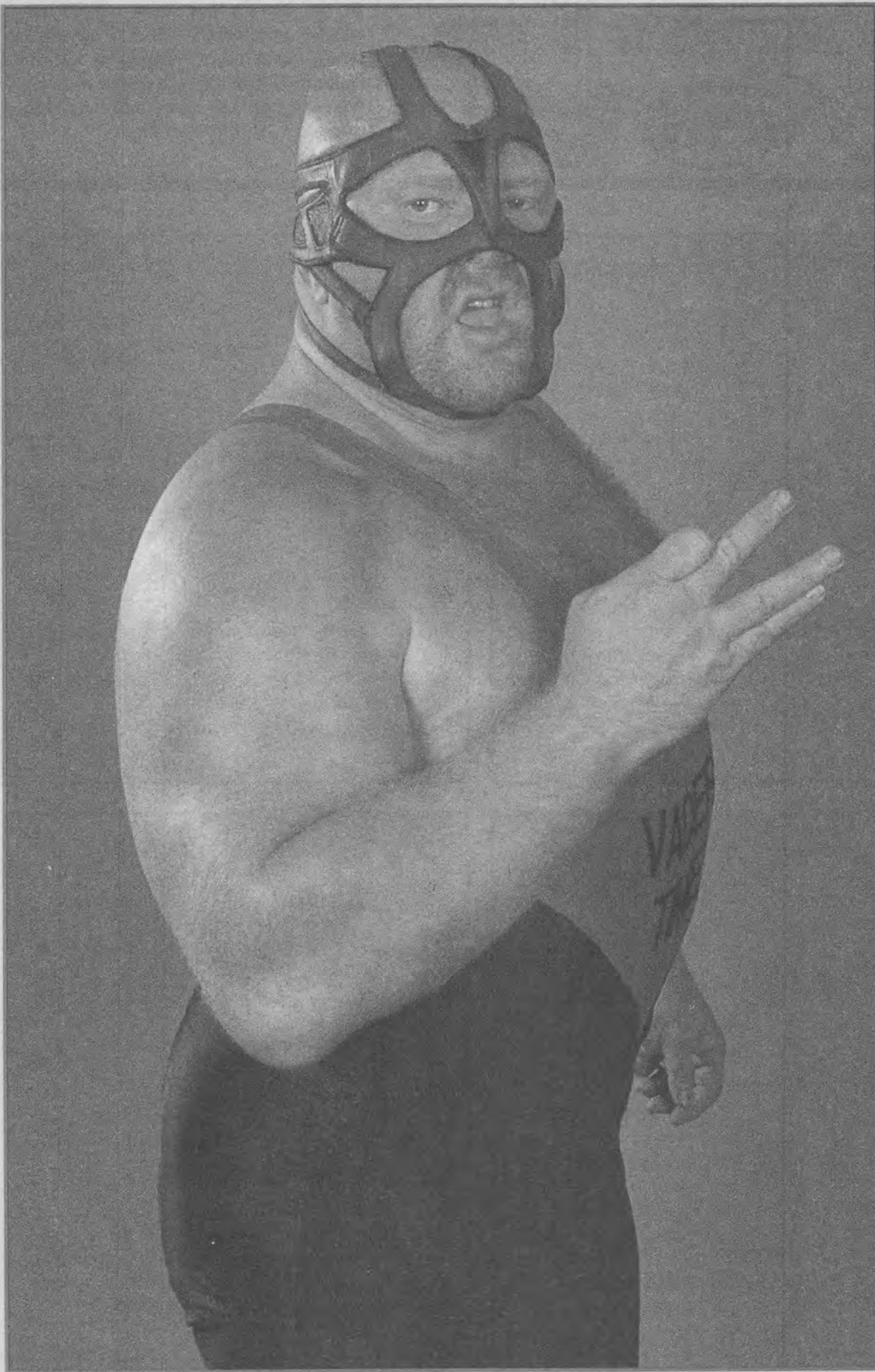
in my way") ... Regained the World belt in December 1992, then got involved in a feud with Cactus Jack. Power-bombed Jack on a concrete floor in April 1993, nearly ending his career ... Jack finally returned at Halloween Havoc, but Vader beat him in a Texas death match after Race stunned him with an electric cattle



Big Van Vader takes a swing at Shawn Michaels, a man he nearly beat for the WWF World title in 1996. Perhaps he'll rekindle that feud once he and The Patriot are through with The Hart Foundation.

prod (*"He's lucky he got out alive"*) ... Lost the World title to Ric Flair at Starrcade '93 ... Following a victory over Hacksaw Duggan for the U.S. belt, Vader confronted Hulk Hogan at Starrcade '94 (*"He hid long enough"*) ... Vader could never beat Hogan and even lost

decisively to him in a Bash at the Beach '95 cage match ... Left WCW soon after getting into a dressing room fight with Paul Orndorff, and made his WWF debut at the 1996 Royal Rumble ... Nearly won the event and one night later attacked WWF President Gorilla Monsoon (*"Didn't matter if he was 100 years old; no one gets in my face"*) ... Even manager Jim Cornette couldn't control him ... Earned a World title match with Shawn Michaels at SummerSlam (*"He feared me then and now"*) ... Insisted the match be restarted after Michaels was counted out and disqualified. Vader went on to lose by pinfall ... Began faring better after signing with Paul Bearer in 1997 ... Did okay in a feud with The Undertaker early this year ... Also briefly teamed with old foe Cactus Jack (Mankind) in 1997 (*"Still a freak"*) ... Caused an international incident in April when he assaulted a Kuwaiti talk show host on live TV during a WWF tour. He was arrested and detained for 11 days ... Returned to the U.S. in a foul mood, but was humbled by Ken Shamrock at the May In Your House ... Slumped through most of the summer before saving The Patriot from the humiliation of having Bret Hart drape a Canadian flag over his fallen body (*"I don't like people who insult my country"*) ... Don't be surprised to see Vader and Patriot make a run at the WWF tag title soon. □



BIG VAN VADER

Where Are They NOW

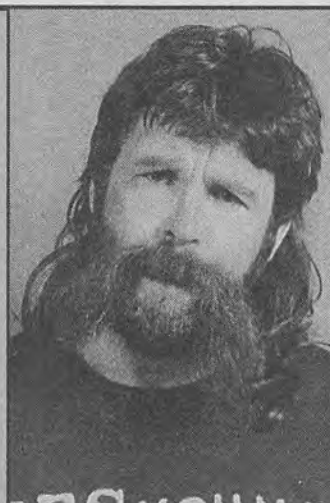
Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers



BOB BACKLUND

His tenure in the WWF has ended, but Mr. Backlund says, "I may return to the sport of wrestling to convey to the plebeians that education is bliss and having a low intellect is merely a crutch." The three-time former WWF champion is living in Connecticut, where

he is studying to become a stockbroker. "I intend to become an independently wealthy human being," he said. "Then I will have the financial opportunity to start a wrestling promotion filled with geniuses like yours truly."



DUTCH MANTEL

The current holder of the USWA heavyweight title has temporarily left the promotion for Puerto Rico, where he plans to defend his belt in the World Wrestling Council. "I was here before and made life miserable for Carlos Colon," Mantel

says. "Now it's Rey Gonzalez' Universal title that I want." Regarding a return to USWA, Dutch says, "They're having some legal problems now, but I'll return as soon as I can and start defending *both* my titles."



GORDON SOLIE

Devastated by the death of his wife, Eileen, in July, the veteran broadcaster tells us he's still trying to recover from his loss and thus isn't doing anything of note at this time. "In the very near future, I intend to look into some pending business options," Solie

said, "but not just yet." Solie also wants to tell his fans he hasn't forgotten all the wonderful times he has shared with them through the years. "I'm still flattered every time I hear from them," he added.



MADUSA

Since losing a retirement match to Akira Hokuto at The Great American Bash, Madusa has been spending a lot of her time at her homes in Florida and Ohio. "I have a legal team looking into that whole retirement stipulation," she said. "If

they can maneuver WCW into reviewing that happened, I have a feeling you'll see me back there early next year." On the personal side, Madusa is dating 6'6", 315-pound Cincinnati Bengals offensive guard Ken Blackman.

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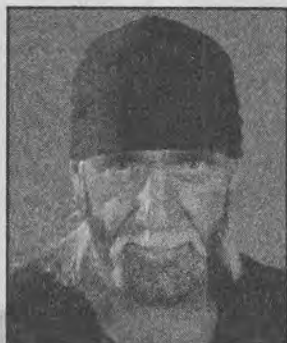
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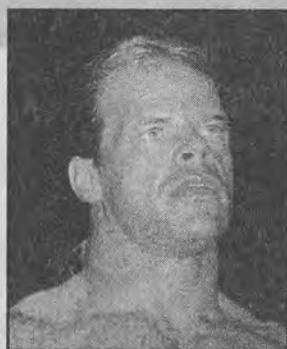
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NEWS FROM THE

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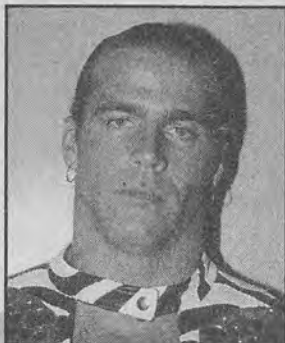
HULK HOGAN VS. LEX LUGER



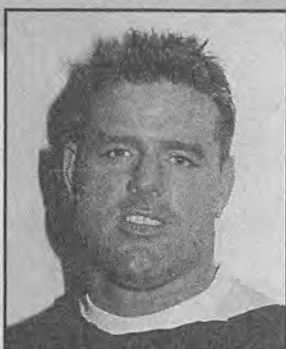
Bobby Heenan was the guest ring announcer for this WCW World title rematch from Road Wild, but he had to make a quick exit when Hogan rushed into the ring and literally "belted" Luger from behind with the World title strap. After a missed legdrop attempt late in the match by Hogan, though, Luger rallied and lifted the champ into his "torture rack." Various NWO members then ran to the ring to save Hogan and thus got him disqualified, but they also placed themselves at the mercy of an enraged Luger. He "racked" each one in succession.

OTHER BOUTS: Kevin Nash wrestled The Giant to a double-countout ... Randy Savage defeated "Diamond" Dallas Page in a death match ... Ric Flair pinned Jeff Jarrett ... Rick & Scott Steiner beat Scott Hall & Syxx ... Eddy Guerrero pinned Dean Malenko ... WCW cruiserweight champion Chris Jericho defeated Ultimo Dragon ... Chris Benoit defeated Konnan.

BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND BY GRAHAM NICOL



SHAWN MICHAELS VS. DAVEY BOY SMITH



Michaels took the WWF European title from Smith at the One Night Only pay-per-view when the referee ruled that Smith was too injured to continue. The "British Bulldog" overpowered Shawn early on, but Shawn eventually got help from Rick Rude, who interfered on his behalf when the action spilled over to ringside. While outside, Smith slipped from the platform on which the ring was set up, and his leg was wedged between it and a barricade. Later, after Shawn removed Smith's knee brace, he applied a figure-four leglock, and the referee decided soon to stop the match and award the belt to Michaels.

OTHER BOUTS: Tiger Ali Singh beat Leif Cassidy ... The Patriot beat Flash Funk ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley pinned Dude Love ... WWF World tag team champs The Headbangers beat Miguel Perez Jr. & Savio Vega ... The Road Warriors beat Henry & Phineas Godwinn ... Big Van Vader pinned Owen Hart ... WWF World champ Bret Hart beat The Undertaker by disqualification.

WILMINGTON, DE BY KATE DAVIDSON



RECKLESS YOUTH VS. LANCE DIAMOND

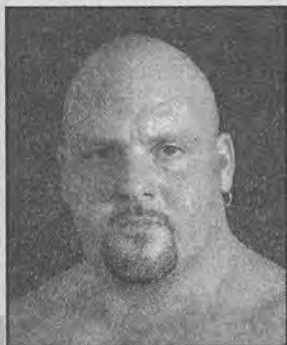


Diamond returned to the East Coast Wrestling Association after recovering from shoulder surgery to face Youth in a match that ended in a time-limit draw. The two rivals spent the entire 15 minutes trading technical holds and moves. Early on, Youth attacked Lance's repaired arm and found that it was still somewhat weak. Diamond retaliated by smashing Youth's head into each turnbuckle in one corner. With a minute left, Lance attempted his "Northern Lights" suplex, but Youth countered with a "Code Red" armbar. Unfortunately for him, the bell rang before he could get Diamond to submit.

OTHER BOUTS: Mr. Ooh La La pinned Gino Caruso ... Mike Mayhem beat The Persian Prince ... Julio Sanchez & J.R. Ryder defeated Viper & Armageddon ... Mike Quackenbush pinned Don Montoya ... Cowboy Blaze beat Ravishing Ronny ... ECWA TV champ Ace Darling beat Cheetah Master by reverse decision ... ECWA heavyweight champ Glen Osbourne beat Boogie Woogie Brown.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

BALTIMORE, MD
BY DON MEYERS



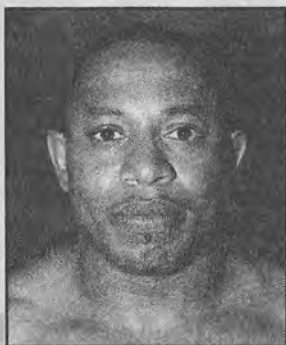
PIT BULL II
VS.
RICK MORTON



Morton turned out to be manager Royce Prophet's surprise opponent for Mid-Eastern Wrestling Federation champ Pit Bull II, but PB II didn't seem to care. The action was nonstop. At the end, Prophet jumped in when PB II had Morton pinned and got his man disqualified. That sparked a huge brawl. Harley Lewis and Derek Domino stormed the ring and jumped PB II. They were soon followed by 911. Later, Jake Roberts entered the ring and DDT'd all three men as Prophet fled.

OTHER BOUTS: Adam Flash pinned David Jericho ... Axl Rotten & Rocco Rock beat Knuckles Zanwich & Johnny Taylor ... Shane Shamrock beat Twiggly Ramirez and Earl the Pearl in a triangle match ... Lucifer & Mad Dog O'Malley beat Joe Thunder & Gino Caruso ... Joey Maggs pinned Bob Starr to win the MEWF Mid-Atlantic title ... Mark Shrader beat Ace Darling ... Harley Lewis & Derek Domino beat Steve Corino & Jimmy Cicero for the MEWF tag team title.

BIRDSBORO, PA
BY TIMOTHY A. WALKER



FLASH FUNK
VS.
ACE DARLING



Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling Americas champ Ace Darling's first title defense was against Flash Funk, and Funk gained an early advantage by working over Ace's left arm. Devon Storm and Judd the Stud tried to interfere on Ace's behalf, but they didn't help much. Darling did nail some high-flying moves and nearly pinned Funk, but Flash came back with a twisting press off the top rope. When he went to pin Ace, though, Storm and Judd attacked him and Darling was disqualified.

OTHER BOUTS: PCW champ Cheetah Master pinned Mr. Ooh La La ... Boogie Woogie Brown pinned PCW junior heavyweight champ Joe Rules in a non-title match ... Gino Caruso defeated Dave Patera ... Lance Diamond beat Tiger Khan ... Bart Gunn beat Col. Jihad Hussein ... Glen Osbourne wrestled Viper to a double-countout ... Chef D.Z. Gillespie defeated J.R. Ryder ... Reckless Youth pinned Mike Quackenbush ... Julio Sanchez pinned Kris Krueger.

FLORENCE, SC
BY BRANDON TURBEVILLE



RIC FLAIR
VS.
JEFF JARRETT



Jarrett had the chance to gain revenge on Flair for kicking him out of the Horsemen earlier this year, but the crafty "Nature Boy" prevailed in the end. Surprisingly, neither man gained any advantage using the figure-four leglock. Throughout the match, Flair blistered Jarrett with chops, while Jarrett countered each with strong punches. Later, Jarrett had Flair pinned while putting his feet on the ropes for extra leverage, but as the referee finished the three-count, he looked up at the last moment and saw this. Not knowing the match had been restarted by the official, Jarrett began to celebrate, and as he did, Flair rolled him up from behind for the win.

OTHER BOUTS: Psicosis defeated Sgt. Buddy Lee Parker ... Dean Malenko beat Eddy Guerrero ... David Taylor beat Bobby Eaton ... Rick & Scott Steiner defeated Wrath & Mortis ... Lex Luger defeated Scott Hall.



Matt Brock's **Plain** *Speaking*

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

In case you're wondering, it beats Japan, although not by much. Saks sent me here because Shawn Michaels was wrestling Davey Boy Smith for the WWF European title, which is one of those titles that nobody cares about except for the person who holds it. Said to Saks, "While you're at it, why don't you give me a rundown of

previous European champions?" "Davey Boy Smith—he's the only one!" Saks said. Right, a very prestigious title. Anyway, it turned out to be a good trip, because not only did Michaels win the belt from Smith, but Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Chyna, and Rick Rude all came to his aid, which was to be expected considering the turmoil they had been creating. First Rude interfered, then Chyna and Helmsley arrived on the scene, and before long, Smith was at a tremendous disadvantage. Then Michaels ripped off Smith's knee brace and applied a figure-four leglock, which had Smith screaming out in pain. The referee said Smith was too injured to continue, Michaels got the belt, and after it was all over, Michaels, Chyna, Helmsley

and Rude kept beating him up nonetheless. It wasn't exactly an act of sportsmanship, but that's what you'd expect from these four, Rude especially. He looked bored doing nothing but TV commentary in ECW, and now he's getting to actually do something he likes, namely beat up people. As for Helmsley and Michaels, that's a pairing that can only hurt Michaels and help Helmsley, which is usually the case when a superior wrestler teams up with an inferior one. Whatever happens next, this group will bear watching over the coming months.

This is no place for the hearty. Lots of Mormons walking around telling people what to do, which is exactly what I didn't need after hearing Saks telling me what to do for over an hour on the phone the other day. "Get an interview with Disco Inferno," he barked, and I told him there was no way I was going to interview anybody named Disco Inferno. "You're being awfully cranky," Saks said, which is when I hung up the phone. Then it kept ringing, and I just ignored it. No point in talking to somebody you don't feel like talking to, especially when they

BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND

SALT LAKE CITY, UT



HELMSLEY, CHYNA, & MICHAELS



BLOODY ALFONSO

insist on being unreasonable. As it turned out, Disco Inferno beat Alex Wright for the WCW TV title here, which says more about how far Wright has fallen than it does about how far Inferno has come. Wright has turned out to be nothing more than an overrated bust since he came over from Germany, and maybe it's time to send him right back where he came from. As for Inferno winning the TV title, I'm reminded of what happened back in the 1980s when The Honky Tonk Man won the WWF Intercontinental title. Everybody said he wouldn't last a week, but he held the title for nearly 15 months. Trust me: The same thing won't happen with Disco Inferno.

This reporter has said all along that women don't belong in the ring with men, but this time it was the man—or whatever he is—who didn't belong in the ring with the woman. I'm talking about Bill Alfonso, who wrestled in a mixed tag team match and ended up getting his rear end beaten by Beulah McGillicutty, who looks much better in a pair of cutoff shorts than she does in wrestling gear, no matter what anybody else says. Back in the '50s and '60s—even in the '70s and for part of the '80s—female wrestlers looked nothing like that, which might

have been the whole problem. Then again, if staring at scantily clad broads is your thing, then spend the night at your local girly club; don't come to a wrestling match. But the way the ECW people see it, whatever it takes to get people into the arena is fine. As for Alfonso, he's probably still feeling the humiliation of getting "Frankensteinered" by Beulah and ending up with a big gash over his eyes and blood rushing down his face. Alfonso required 16 stitches to close the cut, but what he really needed was something for his broken ego. And that's the price for stepping into the ring with a girl.

Finally got in to see the doctor after all these months, and what he said threw me for a loop. Not that it was bad. I was expecting bad and got good. "We thought you had something serious," the doctor said, "but we looked closer at the X-rays and decided it was some kind of shadow. Mr. Brock, have you been drinking lately, because if you have, I urge you to stop immediately. It could cause serious complications." As soon as he said that, I got up, headed to the door, and told him, "No, I haven't been drinking, but I can understand where there might be some residue from my heralded past. You know what they say. It all catches up to you eventually." Then I headed out the door and heard him yelling out something about cholesterol, which was exactly what I didn't want to hear anything about. A doctor put me on a low-cholesterol diet a few years ago, and all it did was cause trouble. None of that anymore. I headed down to the corner greasy spoon and ordered a big plate of eggs and bacon. If you're gonna live, you might as well do it right. □

NEW YORK, NY

PHILADELPHIA, PA

DISHEARTENING!

Bret's Evil Clutch On The WWF

The "Hitman" was once arguably the best role model the WWF had, but over the last year he has changed a lot. He has also changed the federation—and not for the better!

By Bryan Ethier

An open letter to WWF Commissioner Sgt. Slaughter: Dear Commissioner Slaughter:

I am a 12-year-old wrestling fan and a big fan of Bret Hart. My family just moved to New York because my dad was transferred by his company. We grew up in Toronto, where the "Hitman" is a big favorite. I think he's more important than Eric Lindros and every Canadian hockey player in the world. I can't understand why all the kids in my new neighborhood always swear at the "Hitman." I try to tell these kids that Bret is a national hero and very respected in my homeland.

All Bret wants people to do is respect Canada. It seems no one where I live likes Canadians. I don't think they like me.

Could you possibly do something, maybe have a Bret Hart night in New York, so all my friends can see what a good guy Bret is? I think that would help everyone understand Bret more.

Maybe nobody would be mad at

anybody anymore.

Sincerely,
Carl Kartier

(letter received in the offices of
INSIDE WRESTLING, September 5,
1997)

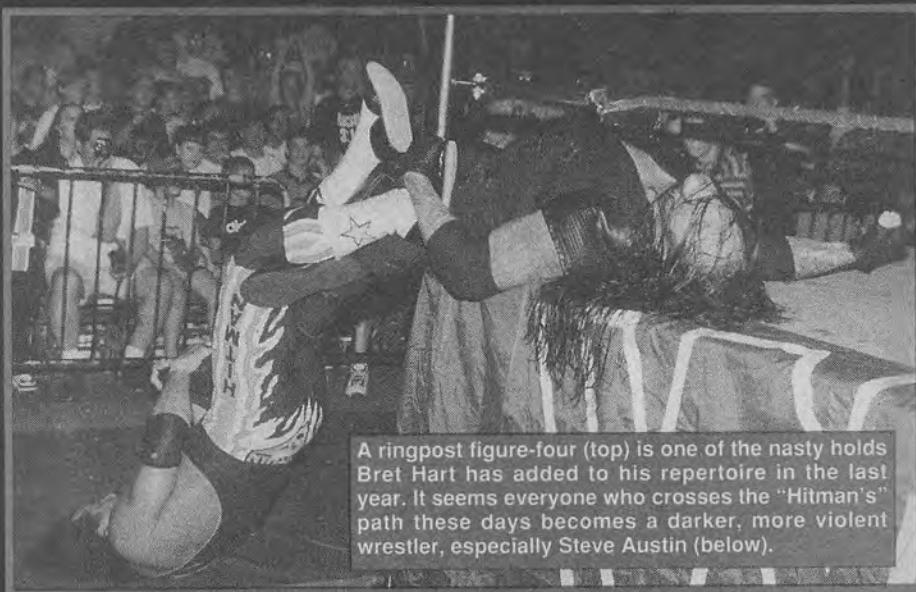
CINCINNATI, SEPTEMBER 8,
1997

"Hey, America, you bunch of

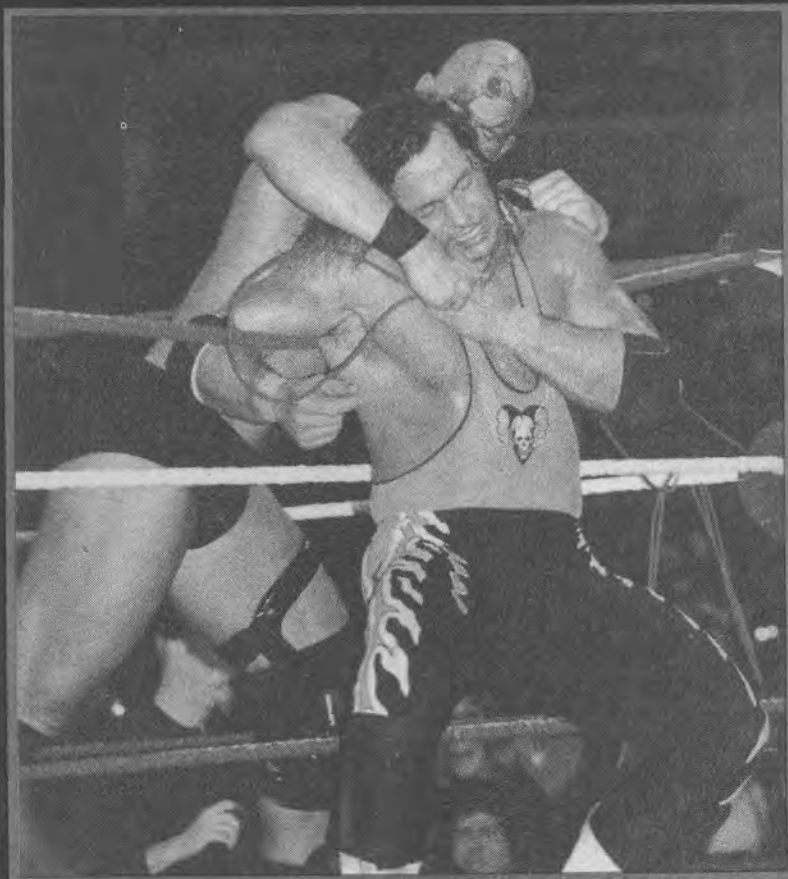
idiots," Bret Hart bellowed. "Welcome to America, land of disgraced heroes."

Hart was referring to former Cincinnati Reds star Pete Rose, banned from baseball for gambling. And this was just the beginning of yet another typical Hart assault on the American public.

Over the next two hours, the



A ringpost figure-four (top) is one of the nasty holds Bret Hart has added to his repertoire in the last year. It seems everyone who crosses the "Hitman's" path these days becomes a darker, more violent wrestler, especially Steve Austin (below).





The entire Hart Foundation, which spews anti-American venom wherever it goes, has made the WWF a more violent federation. Bret, of course, is the leader of that group.

"Hitman" lambasted anything and everyone American. He termed Vader a "huge pile of human excrement." He used the steel ring steps as a weapon against Vader; he wielded a metal chair against both Vader and The Patriot.

Bret Hart inflicted physical and emotional damage upon his American enemies. Then he returned to his American hotel to insult the American staff.

Real nice guy, this Bret Hart.

The WWF world has become a different place since the "Hitman" returned to it a year ago. A better place? That's what Hart envisioned, in his own arrogant, warped way. It has become a world so shattered by vested factions such as the Hart Foundation, DOA, and NOD that the WWF hardly resembles a federation. It looks more like an embattled country shattered by left and right wing terrorist agencies.

A year ago, Hart returned to the WWF to help "clean it up." That is, to purge the organization of Shawn Michaels. At the time, Hart complained that Michaels was too self-interested to be a role model.

He was a poor ambassador

for the organization, so said Hart.

Since Hart made that declaration, Vince McMahon and associates have struggled in vain to return wrestling to the ring and away from the sidelines.

Their efforts have failed miserably, thanks to endless resistance to reform from Michaels, Steve

Austin, The Undertaker, and others.

"The WWF has become a real mess, thanks to Bret Hart," explained Jim Ross. "Wherever Bret and The Hart Foundation go, trouble follows."

The nightly skirmishes, such as those waged by Hart and Patriot, Michaels and Davey Boy Smith, Vader and Bret Hart, Austin and Owen Hart, are inconsequential in the long run. What is most disturbing to McMahon is that normally stable personalities such as The Undertaker have become obsessed with Hart to the exclusion of all other issues.

"Bret has made us all mad," said The Patriot. "I don't mean mad as in angry. I think we've all lost a bit of our senses."

Hart has expanded his quarrel with Michaels to include virtually every American-born wrestler. Meanwhile, Michaels, once the darling of McMahon and WWF fans, has become a pariah to both. He has continuously mocked McMahon and questioned his leader-



Though they despise each other, Michaels and Bret have both managed to draw the ire of The Undertaker in recent months. And whether they want to admit it or not, they have become in some ways very similar people.



When Bret Hart is involved, what WWF match doesn't end with someone (in this case Michaels) charging the ring? Whatever happened to the concept of two men trying to out-wrestle each other?

ship skills. His either-you're-with-me-or-you're-against-me attitude has all but alienated him from the mainstream crowd.

Frighteningly, the man he once ridiculed has become the man he now emulates.

Then there's Steve Austin, yet another perpetrator of the ring violence that seems to accompany every match of The Hart Foundation. Austin all but drew Hart out of his respite by calling him "too chicken to fight me."

These days, he is considered a hero because he'll ruthlessly attack anyone who gets under his skin, including McMahon, Ross, and Slaughter. The Austin-Hart relationship underscores the change in tone in the WWF, particularly among the fans. U.S. fans not only condone his gangland tactics—they encourage them! The same holds true for Hart in matches in Canada.

The message seems clear: Violence is good if it furthers your agenda. Whatever happened to ideals so fervently preached by Hart? How can a rattlesnake such as Austin be considered a good guy when his mission is primarily to hurt?

"Every wrestler seems to be displaying a mean streak these days, even good-hearted people such as

Ken Shamrock and The Patriot," said a WWF insider. "The Undertaker, once so taken by unearthly matters, seems bent only gaining vengeance against Hart and Michaels."

Michaels, of course, had a hand in 'Taker's losing the World title to

Bret at SummerSlam. When he unintentionally whacked 'Taker with a chair, Hart rallied to win the belt. Undertaker, already at odds with both men, would now like to see them six feet under.

"Shawn Michaels, I will not rest until your flesh is rotting from your bones," he said in September. Word has it 'Taker is seeking the same smell of death and burning flesh in Bret Hart.

Undertaker will still likely have to deal with his brother, Kane, but that whole issue has slipped to the side. And if you carefully monitor Undertaker's demeanor, he sounds and looks less like a creature from the dark side than a man consumed by the dark side of his soul.

WWF fans have come to see a different side of many wrestlers, thanks to Bret Hart's evil grasp on the federation. It would be shocking if McMahon decided to have a Bret Hart day. Fans hope the dark side of the "Hitman" has not possessed his soul as well. □



The Undertaker was always one of the scarier wrestlers in the WWF. But he used to be scary only because he was so obsessed with death and the "dark side." When dealing with Bret, he has been rather sadistic.

WHO IS ON THE WCW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE...



They operate in secret.

Nobody knows who they are.

*The chairman of the WCW Executive
Committee is J.J. Dillon, but who is
sitting in the other chairs?*

AND WHY ARE THEY MAKING SUCH STUPID DECISIONS??

"Who own the Chiefs?"

"Owwwwwns. Owwwwwns."

—Exchange between
French-speaking goaltender
and general manager in the
movie *Slap Shot*

By Dave Lenker

OKAY, SO WHO runs WCW? The Executive Committee, you say? Well, that just brings up another line from the classic hockey movie *Slap Shot*, in which a rag-tag minor league hockey team is put up for sale, and the coach of the team, Reg Dunlap—played by Paul Newman—tries to find the mysterious owner.

Anyway, in one scene, another one of the players asks Dunlap who owns the team, and Dunlap replies, "The corporation owns it." Only nobody knows who's in charge of the corporation.

Sounds like WCW, doesn't it? The only difference is that in WCW, we know who's in charge of the Executive Committee. It's J.J. Dillon, the chairman. But who are the other members of the committee? And why are they making such stupid decisions?

Who run WCW?

Runs. Runs.

We hate to say this, but we have no idea.

Regarding the stupid decisions, there have been plenty of them. Dillon started out good when he stripped Eric Bischoff of his power, but it's been all downhill since, especially for Dillon's physical health. He got beaten up by Hogan on *Nitro* for all the cable-TV world to see. The next week, the Executive Committee announced that the new acting chairman was Roddy Piper. The new acting chairman immediately carried

out three acts. First, he changed the Fall Brawl "War Games" main event from the NWO vs. Ric Flair, Curt Hennig, "Diamond" Dallas Page, and Lex Luger, to the NWO vs. The Four Horsemen. Luger and Page weren't getting along, he reasoned.

Then he promised fans that Hogan would wrestle Sting by the end of 1997. That made the fans very happy.

Finally, he gave himself a steel cage match against Hogan in the

as suspend Hogan, or at the very least fine him, or maybe strip him of the World title. Nothing. There was no show of support for the chairman of the Executive Committee.

And, of course, Bischoff is running wild again. He practically controls *Nitro*. He comes out and speaks whenever he wishes, even though he was explicitly told last spring that he couldn't appear at WCW shows. Now he shows up whenever he wants, as if nothing happened.

As for Hogan, he's the World champion, but he rarely defends the belt, other than once every month ... or two ... or four. Basically,



We have yet to see Ted Turner get involved in the day-to-day operations of WCW. Maybe if he did, the executive committee would make better decisions. Does he even know who's on that committee?



Roddy Piper did several things upon being named acting chairman of the executive committee: For one, he promised Sting a shot at Hulk Hogan (left) by year's end. Good. He also figured since he had success against Hogan in the past (below), he deserved another shot at him. Convenient.

main event of Halloween Havoc.

Obviously, Piper was not an impartial arbiter, but we assumed that Piper was acting with the blessing of the Executive Committee. Maybe we were right, maybe we were wrong. There's no way of finding out. We don't know who's on the Executive Committee, so we can't ask.

Then we have the Dillon-Hogan situation. According to Dillon, he had asked WCW wrestlers not to intervene if he ever got attacked by the NWO. He insisted it was his job alone to deal with the NWO. Well, the NWO attacked (in the form of Hogan and Bischoff), and the WCW wrestlers followed orders exactly. But the committee should have done something to back up Dillon, such



Dillon's job was to keep the NWO from running roughshod over WCW, and now the NWO is running roughshod over WCW as much as ever. What happened after Scott Hall used an "Outsiders' Edge" on referee Mark Curtis on *Nitro*? Nothing!

The problem is, we don't know who to blame. We tried our hardest to find out who was on the

Executive Committee, but we got blocked at every turn. They do everything privately, secretly, as if they're some kind of clandestine government organization. The thing the Executive Committee does best is hide its identity and keep secrets.

We found out the location of a high-level WCW meeting. It was being held at a hotel in Atlanta.

"HEY, YOU, ARE *YOU* ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE?"

In researching this story on the WCW executive committee, the editors of *INSIDE WRESTLING* tried very hard to find out the identity of at least one member of the executive committee. We even tried asking 10 of the people we regularly see at WCW cards point-blank if they were on the committee. The answers:

Lee Marshall (broadcaster): "I fully support the efforts of that committee."

Bobby Heenan (broadcaster): "No comment other than I fully support what they're doing."

Dusty Rhodes (broadcaster): "No comment."

Arn Anderson (talent scout): "I support what the committee is

doing 100 percent. I have no other comment."

Tony Schiavone (broadcaster): "I can't comment on that."

Paul Orndorff (former wrestler): "I fully support the efforts of the WCW executive committee."

Nick Patrick (senior referee): "No comment."

Terry Taylor (matchmaker/talent scout): "They have my total support."

Larry Zbyszko (broadcaster): "I can't comment on that."

Gene Okerlund (broadcaster): "All I can say is I support everything they've done 100 percent."

Then we tried to attend the meeting. You're not going to believe this, but it's true: We not only didn't get up to the conference room where the meeting was being held, but we didn't even make it through the front door before we were stopped by a security guard.

HIM: The meeting is off-limits to the media.

US: What meeting?

HIM: You know what meeting.

US: What media?

HIM: You. You're part of the media. Don't try to hide it or I'll have you arrested.

That wasn't a bad idea. If he arrested us, the Executive Committee would have had to press charges, and then we would have found out the identity of our accusers. But that sounded like a violation of journalistic ethics, so we chose a different route: the telephone.

OPERATOR: WCW, may I help you?

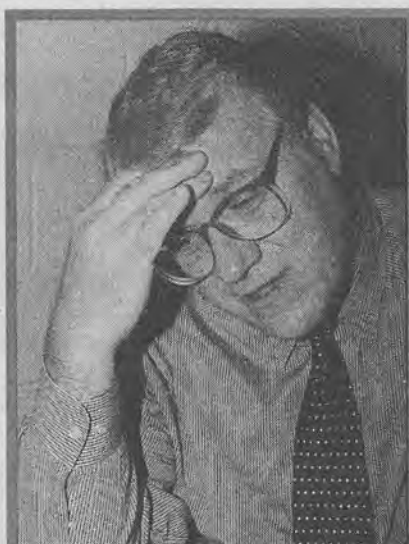
US: Yes, we would like to speak to a member of the Executive Committee.

OPERATOR: Just one moment, please.

At that point, we were thinking, *Great, she went for it.* But a few seconds later ...

HIM: J.J. Dillon ...

Click.



J.J. Dillon doesn't look too good here. Is that because he's still feeling the effects of the attack Hulk Hogan and Eric Bischoff perpetrated upon him, or because even he can't figure out what his fellow committee members are doing?



Almost every week on *Nitro*, Eric Bischoff (with or without Hulk Hogan) insists on getting some time to speak his mind. Doesn't the committee have the power to stop him from doing this?

Then we came up with a long list of people that might be no the Executive Committee. Prime candidates, people with connections to wrestling. We called them (see sidebar) and asked point-blank, "Are you on the WCW Executive Committee?"

Most of them said either no, no comment, or, our favorite, "I fully support the efforts of the WCW Executive committee," as if everyone in WCW has been instructed to say just that.

The official reason the identity of the Executive Committee members has been kept under wraps is that this supposedly ensures that members are not vulnerable to outside influences (i.e. the NWO). We just don't buy that. What's to stop a member of the Executive Committee from approaching the NWO, particularly if he cannot be held accountable by the press?

Maybe the Executive Committee is just as happy to remain anonymous, though. If you made the kind of decisions they have recently, wouldn't you? □



OUR HOLIDAY WISH LIST FOR THE STARS

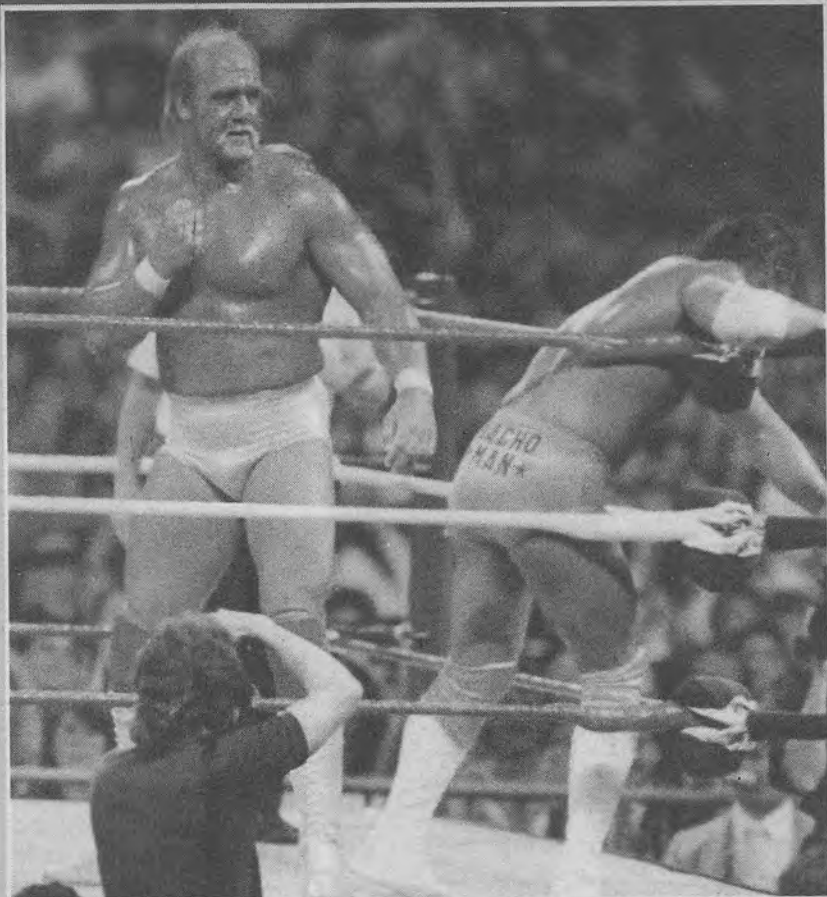
**Merry Christmas! Happy
Chanukah! Happy Kwanza!
No matter what your religious
background is—and even if
you're not the least bit
religious—it's time to celebrate
the holiday season and time for
us to give gifts to some of our
favorites in the sport!**

THE WINTER HOLIDAY season is upon us, a time for good cheer, thoughts of renewal, faith, and gift-giving. We here at *INSIDE WRESTLING* look forward to the special feeling that pervades the world at this time of year. And we love to give as much as anyone!

This is a time when we give to the people who are most in need. The editors of *INSIDE WRESTLING* have made a tradition of handing out symbolic gifts to needy wrestlers, managers, valets, federation officials, and broadcasters. Whether it's a contender who needs a title shot or a manager who needs a break, there's something for everyone on our gift table.

It's only fair. These people have given us so much to write about. Where would wrestling magazines be without wrestlers? So these gifts are offered in the spirit of the holidays. And we don't expect anything in return.

For Steve Austin, we wish the gift of patience and the gift of health. Sometimes they go hand



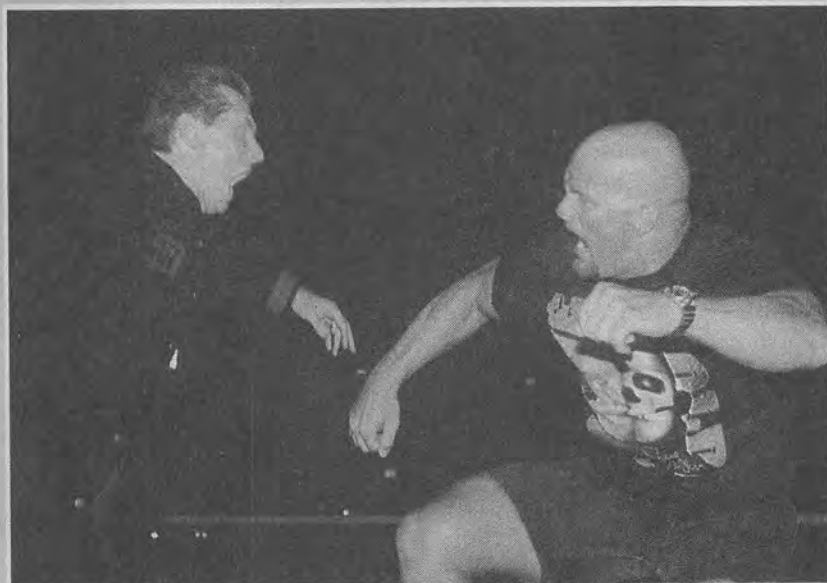
Happy holidays, Hulk! We can't give you this photo of you on your way to winning the WWF title from Randy Savage in 1989, but we wish we could. If you looked at it enough, maybe you'd remember the kind of courageous fighter you were then.

in hand. "Stone-Cold" was so anxious to return from his acute spinal trauma injury that he

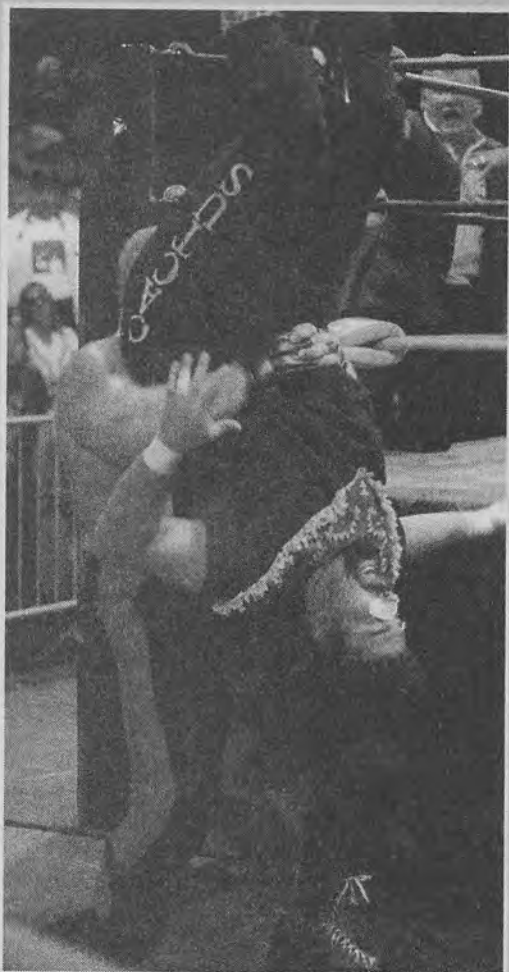
viciously attacked WWF head Vince McMahon. Then he said, "I'm sick of sittin' around watching." Would he rather be paralyzed from the neck down? Patience, Steve, patience. And the best of health to you in the upcoming year. The WWF needs you.

For Hulk Hogan, and this is getting monotonous, we wish a calendar and a set of WWF videos from the mid-1980s. Yeah, as in the past, we've given him the calendar so that he can figure out WCW's 30-day rule for title defenses before, but the videos are new. Maybe Hogan would regain some pride if he saw how outstanding he was in the mid-1980s, when he dominated the WWF. Maybe he'd act like a man again.

For Arn Anderson, we wish a happy—and never-ending—retire-



Happy holidays, "Stone-Cold"! We don't have a tangible gift for you this year. We just want to tell you to be patient and find a way to control that temper of yours. We want to see a lot of you in the ring in 1998!



Happy holidays, Cactus/Mankind/Dude Love! We want to give you the gift of good mental health. We're afraid one of those power bomb Big Van Vader used on you in 1993 did permanent damage.

ment. Too many wrestlers have returned to the ring after retiring. Don't be one of them, Arn.

For Curt Hennig, we wish a treadmill. You know, one of those exercise machines. Now that he has joined Hulk Hogan's NWO, he'll feel like he's on a treadmill if he's trying to win anything greater than the U.S. title in WCW.

For Steve McMichael, we wish a loyal wife and a new nickname. "Mongo"? What's that?

For Debra McMichael, we wish a trusting husband.

For Faarooq, we wish a new name for the Nation of Domination. How about, Nation of

Humiliation, since they are almost always losing?

For Disco Inferno, we wish a CD player. Now that he has escaped from the '70s, he might enjoy the brilliance and clarity of digital sound. Yes, Disco, the '70s Preservation Society does have CDs.

For Cactus Jack, we wish a good psychologist. First he's Cactus Jack, then he's Mankind, now he's Dude Love (and sometimes Mankind and occasionally Cactus). We think that power bomb Big Van Vader gave him nearly five years ago had long-lasting effects. Maybe it's time for Cactus to lie down on a couch and find his true personality ... if he has one.

For J.J. Dillon, we wish respect. He sure isn't getting any as chairman of WCW's Executive Committee.

For Rob Van Dam, we wish another night besides Monday. Wrestling

is a seven-day sport, Rob. Winning on one day isn't enough. And wait a minute, when's the last time "Mr. Monday Night" actually wrestled on Monday night?

For Jerry Lawler, we wish a lifetime membership to the Automobile Association of America, and a two-week vacation on a secluded island. "The King" was awfully active on the road over the past year, providing commentary on WWF broadcasts and also wrestling in three federations: the USWA, ECW, and the WWF. He can use a break.

For Francine, we wish a new wardrobe. Seriously, honey, it's

not a proper sight for under-18 viewers at ringside and on TV when you climb through the ropes. Put something on that fully covers what needs to be covered!

For Bam Bam Bigelow, we wish more Dudleys. They have revived his career.

For the Dudleys, we wish less Bam Bam Bigelow. He's killing their careers. Actually, he's killing *them* (well, at least Spike).

For Bill Alfonso, we wish some pride. He can't have too much left after losing to Beulah McGillicutty.

For "Diamond" Dallas Page, we wish a subscription to *U.S. News & World Report*. That *Playboy* thing just didn't work out.



Happy holidays, Francine! We hope you get a nice gift certificate to a department store this year. That way you can go out and buy some outfits that are a tad less revealing.



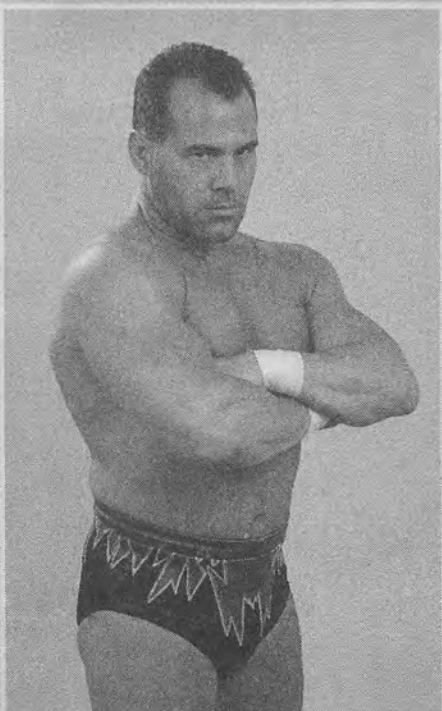
Happy holidays, Bret! This year we hope you get a healthy dose of something we used to think you already had: humility. Show some respect to the people who pay to watch you compete.

rriors, is by attacking them from behind.

For Sherri Martel, we wish a new hair stylist. That messy, gelled-up look is getting old.

For Goldust, we wish a happy reunion with his father, Dusty Rhodes. The two haven't spoken in years, and that's just sad.

For Diana Smith, Davey Boy's wife, we wish no more confrontations with Chyna. That's one battle she can't win.



For Bret Hart, we wish humility. A lot of humility. We're tired of hearing about how he's the best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever will be, and we're tired of him complaining about everything American.

For Dean Malenko, we wish the respect he deserves now after being named the number-one wrestler in the 1997 "PWI 500." Congratulations, Dean.

For ECW, we wish less blood, more wrestling, and a year full of great pay-per-views. WCW and the WWF could use a little more competition.

For George "The Animal" Steele, we wish a lifetime supply of turnbuckles for him to chew on. Maybe hunger was the reason he came out of retirement!

For Henry and Phineas Godwinn, we wish some guts. The only way they can beat anybody, especially The Road War-



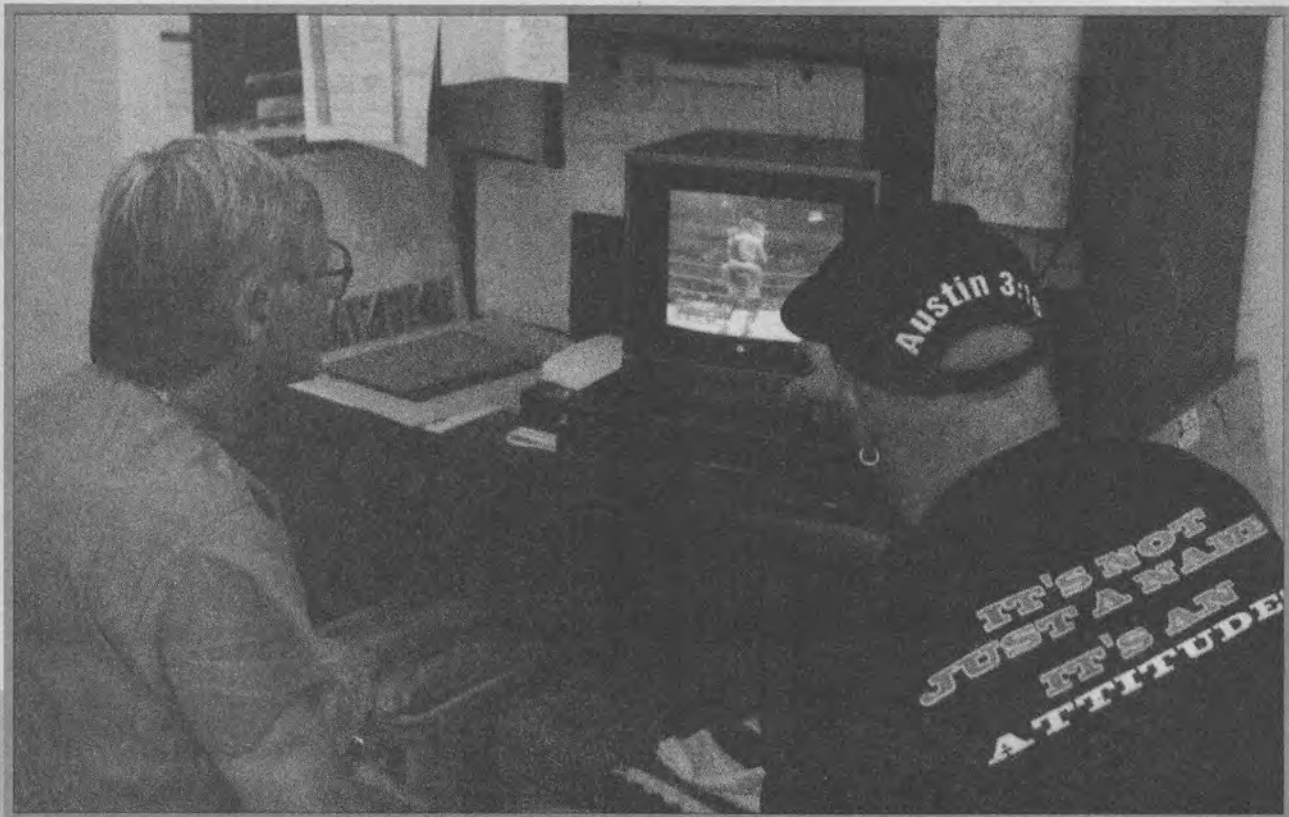
Happy holidays, John Kronus! Oh, and congratulations on winning the ECW tag team title with New Jack. We wish you two a long title reign and hope you can continue to get along.

For John Kronus, we wish a long partnership with New Jack now that former partner Perry Saturn has left for WCW. We believe that Kronus could be successful with just about anyone.

And to all of you, happy holidays and best wishes for another great year of wrestling! □

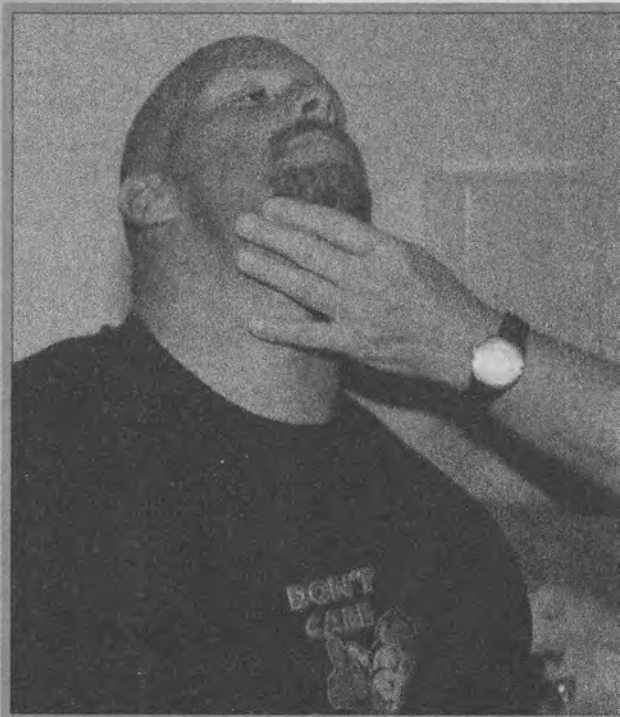
Happy holidays, Dean Malenko! You had a terrific 1997, and we hope you continue to get the respect that you have deserved for so many years.

AUSTIN'S DOCTOR



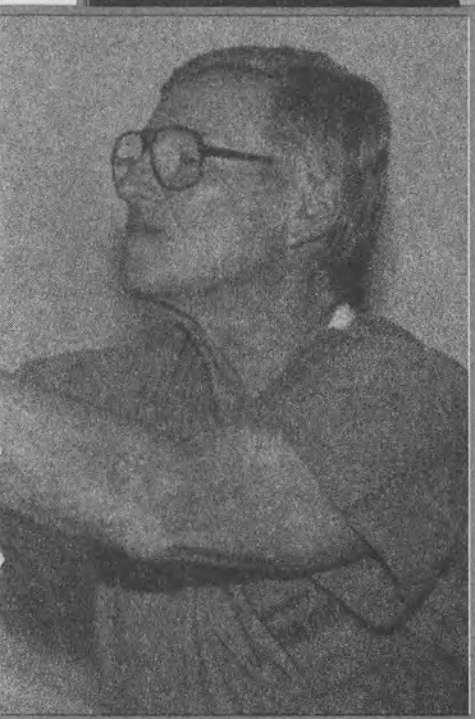
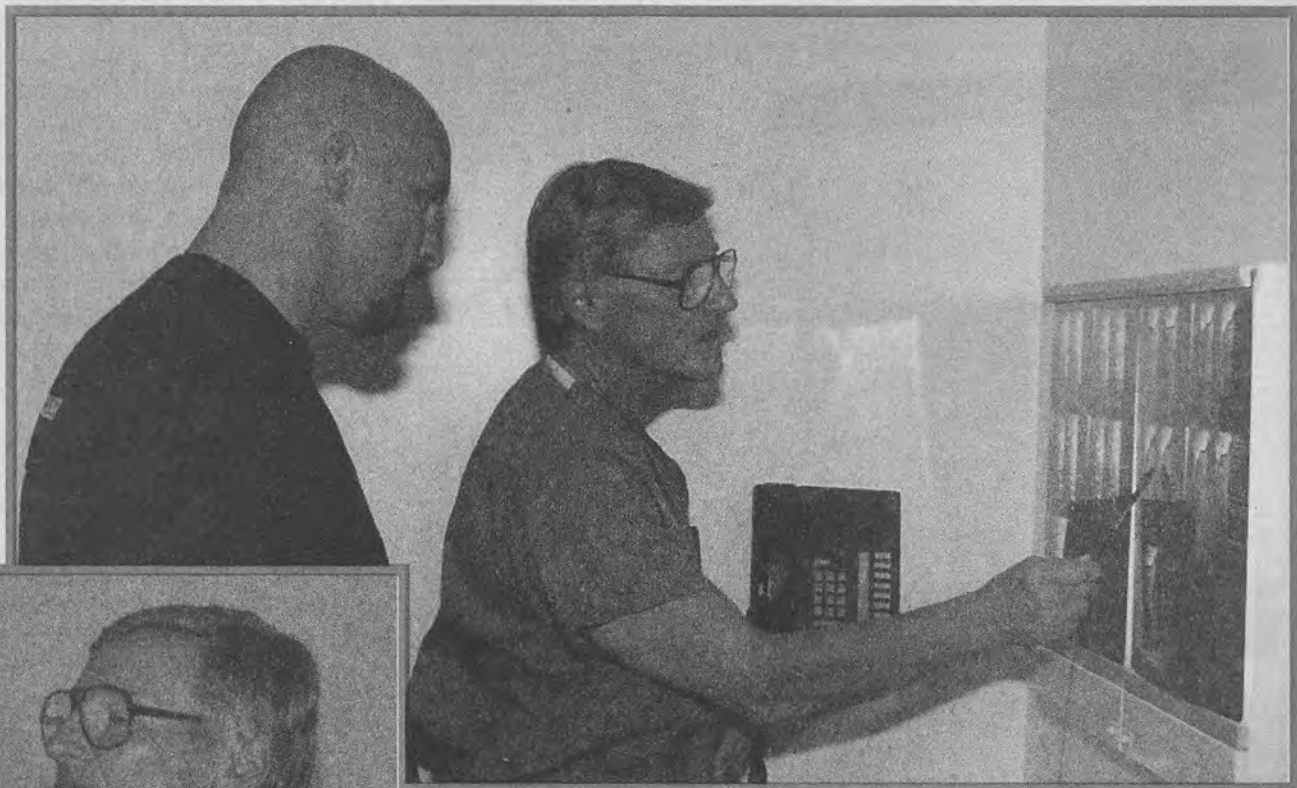
Photos by Bill Apter

After suffering the effects of spinal shock syndrome, Steve Austin is more determined than ever to compete again. But the danger of reinjury weighs heavy on his mind. With the aid of a noted specialist, he grapples with the most difficult dilemma of his life



HAS HIS DOUBTS!

“We’re Reserving Judgment On Whether It’s Wise For Steve To Continue Wrestling”



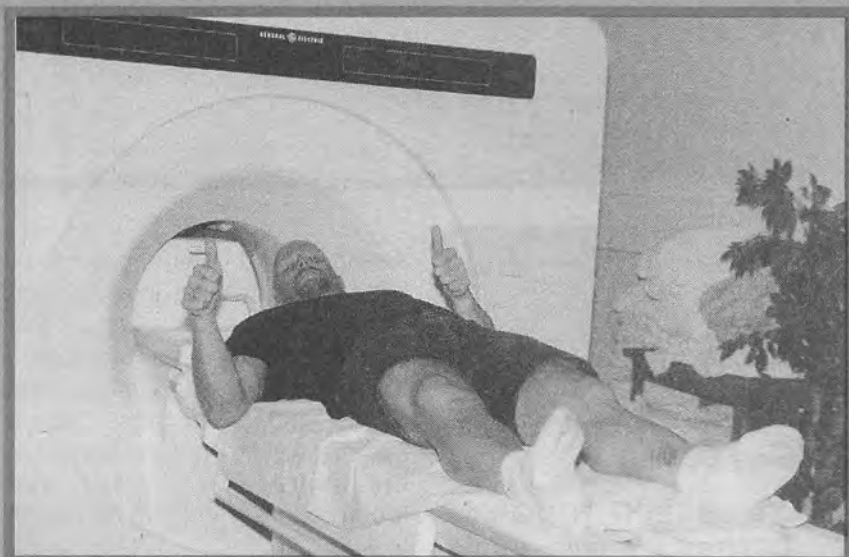
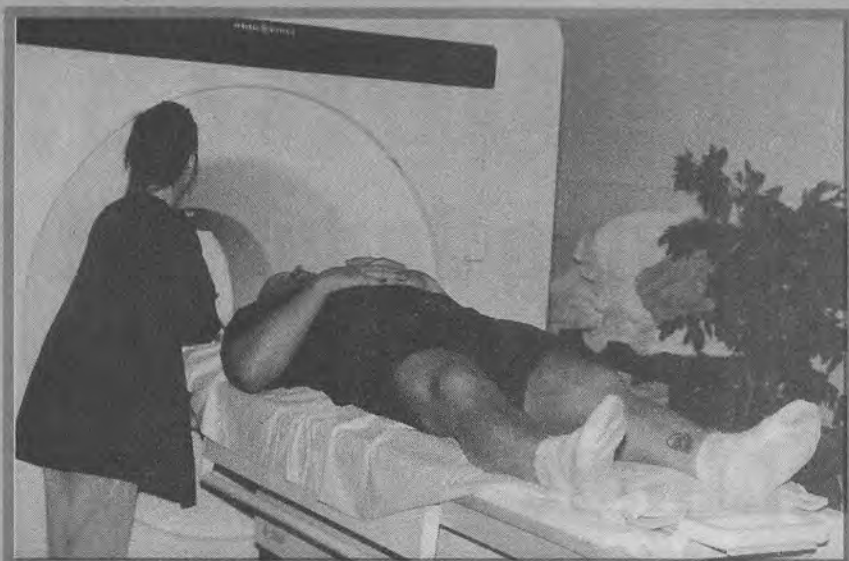
Austin points out to Dr. Joseph Torg just what happened to his neck in the SummerSlam match (opposite page, top). Torg reviews Austin's latest set of neck X-rays (above). The doctor takes a close look at Austin's neck (left).

By Harry Burkett

DR. JOSEPH TORG has viewed the memorable footage of Owen Hart pile-driving Steve Austin into the mat at SummerSlam several times. The videotape vividly depicts

Austin's head, well below Hart's knees, being thrust into the canvas with tremendous force. The weight of the two men combined to jam Austin's head into the top of his spine. For more than a minute, Austin had no feeling in his limbs. Even today, the footage is very difficult for Austin to watch.

But Dr. Torg has seen just about everything during his 30 years as an orthopedic surgeon. His contributions to sports medi-



Austin, with some help from a nurse, has an MRI test done on his neck. He was obviously feeling very good when the MRI was over. The news he got from Dr. Torg that day was encouraging.

cine have made him one of the most prominent physicians in the United States. If Steve Austin wanted the best care possible, he couldn't have chosen a better man.

In early-September, Austin paid his first visit to Dr. Torg's Philadelphia office. It had only been a week since his injury, and Austin was eager to learn exactly what was wrong. Tests and examinations confirmed Dr. Torg's suspicions. Austin suffered from spinal shock syndrome.

"To be specific, Steve had been struck with transient quadriplegia," said Dr. Torg. "In effect, his spinal cord had been pinched, leaving him temporarily paralyzed. Spinal shock isn't a common occurrence, but when it does happen, it is usually seen on the football field. When someone is lunging for a football, playing ice hockey, or diving into a shallow pool, it's important to remember one basic concept: If you hit the top of your head, you're asking for trouble."

A question that is forefront in most fans' minds is whether Austin made matters worse by completing his match with Owen. Austin had barely recovered from his temporary paralysis when he grabbed Hart from behind and rolled him up for the pin. Although "Stone-Cold" was declared the winner, he could hardly leave the ring under his own power. The daring feat had earned Austin the Intercontinental title, but wasn't it a very foolhardy thing to do?

"I think Steve demonstrated extraordinary will and desire in those circumstances," Dr. Torg said. "Fortunately, Steve didn't place any stress on his spinal cord when he rolled up his opponent. Therefore, that last move didn't aggravate his condition."

Austin's condition, however, may be in peril if he returns to the ring too soon. He has again declared war on Owen Hart.

"When Owen dropped me on my head, he almost took away everything I had accomplished over the past eight years," Austin said. "Revenge is gonna be mine when I get a hold of his sorry carcass!"

At the moment, Austin feels fine and is experiencing no residual effects from his injury. In fact, the results of tests administered by Dr. Torg in early-October seemed encouraging. But Austin is well-aware of the risks involved in returning to action. And he is very mindful of Dr. Torg's assessment of the situation.

"Steve is an excellent patient," Dr. Torg said. "He's a bright guy and understands what's going on. He asks all the right questions and is cooperating fully in his recovery. If no more damage is done, there will probably be no long-term ramifications in regard to this particular injury. But a recurrence of the paralysis could occur if Steve suffers another blow to the top of the head or to the spinal column."

In other words, it's difficult to say whether Austin's body can withstand the rigors of nightly competition. Another vicious



Austin shows some nurses the story in the Holiday 1997 issue of *The Wrestler* that detailed his incredible win over Owen Hart at SummerSlam. He's ready for more wars with Owen, but he had better be careful.

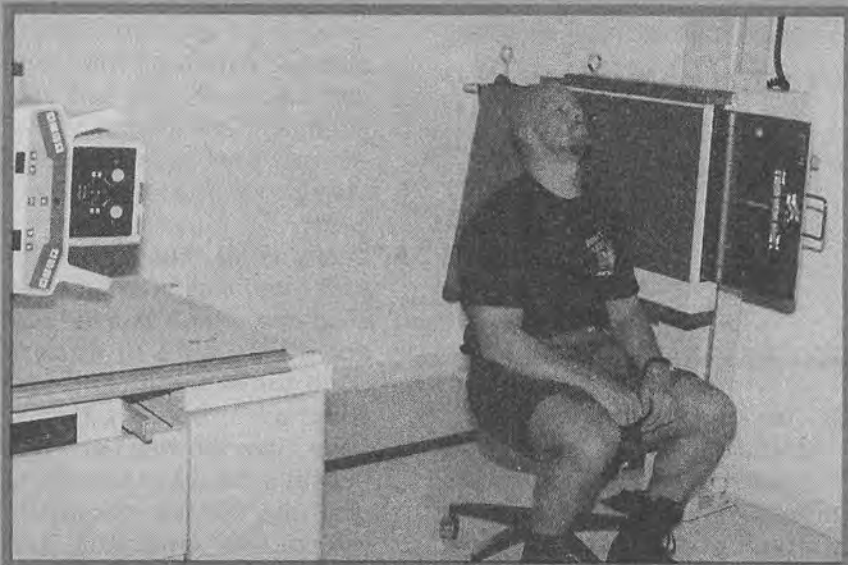
piledriver or DDT could send Austin back to the hospital in a hurry. With this in mind, the question must be asked: Should Steve Austin return to the ring?

"Unfortunately for Steve, the

only precaution he can take is to prevent his head from being rammed into the mat again," Dr. Torg said. "That's why we're reserving judgment on whether it's wise for Steve to continue wrestling."

Austin, who signed a waiver absolving the WWF of any responsibility in the event of another injury, seems more optimistic about his career outlook. "I'm ready to get back in that ring and stomp some mudholes in a few people," he said. "I've got a lot to do before I'm put out to pasture. Look, I ain't gonna do nothing stupid. But it's time for me to wrestle again. Nobody can tell me no different—and that's the bottom line!"

For someone whose professional future is in doubt, Austin is certainly talking like someone who has made up his mind. We must hope, however, that Austin's concern for his own well-being is every bit as powerful than his determination to defeat Owen Hart. □



Austin was unusually patient as he waited for X-rays on his neck to be completed. "Stone-Cold" may have to show a bit more patience in the ring, utilizing a more conservative approach. There's not much he can do about his opponents' style, however.

HOTSEAT

REY MISTERIO JR.

**"IF I WON'T WRESTLE HURT,
I MIGHT AS WELL QUIT!"**

REY MISTERIO JR. is one of the smallest men in wrestling. At 5'3", 140 pounds, he is less than half the weight of many heavyweights, and less than one-third the weight of giants like The Giant. But what this international star lacks in size and power, he more than makes up for in his exceptional wrestling ability and heart.

It was six weeks prior to the Road Wild pay-per-view when Konnan, his long-time friend and mentor, joined the New World Order. In one of his first acts, Konnan came out and placed a painful leglock on Misterio, breaking Misterio's leg and injuring his knee. But Misterio came back and wrestled Konnan at Road Wild on August 9, 1997, in Sturgis, South Dakota. Unfortunately, he lost by submission in a Mexican death match and hurt his leg again.

That injury appeared to be even more serious than the first, and it was feared that he might have to undergo surgery. But after meeting with specialists, Misterio learned that only extensive rehab was necessary. He had narrowly avoided the knife.

Misterio worked hard and came back in late-September for a match against Eddy Guerrero on

Nitro. It was a spectacular bout, highlighted by fast-paced aerial and mat moves that kept the crowd on its feet. Misterio won.

But there's more to come. Misterio hasn't forgotten about Konnan and wants a few more shots at him. The injuries didn't force him to take a step backward, as Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker discovered when he spoke with Misterio for this exclusive interview.

**"I guess Konnan's not as good
a man as I thought he was.
For some reason he had
something against me and
tried to drive me out of the
sport, but it wasn't
going to work."**

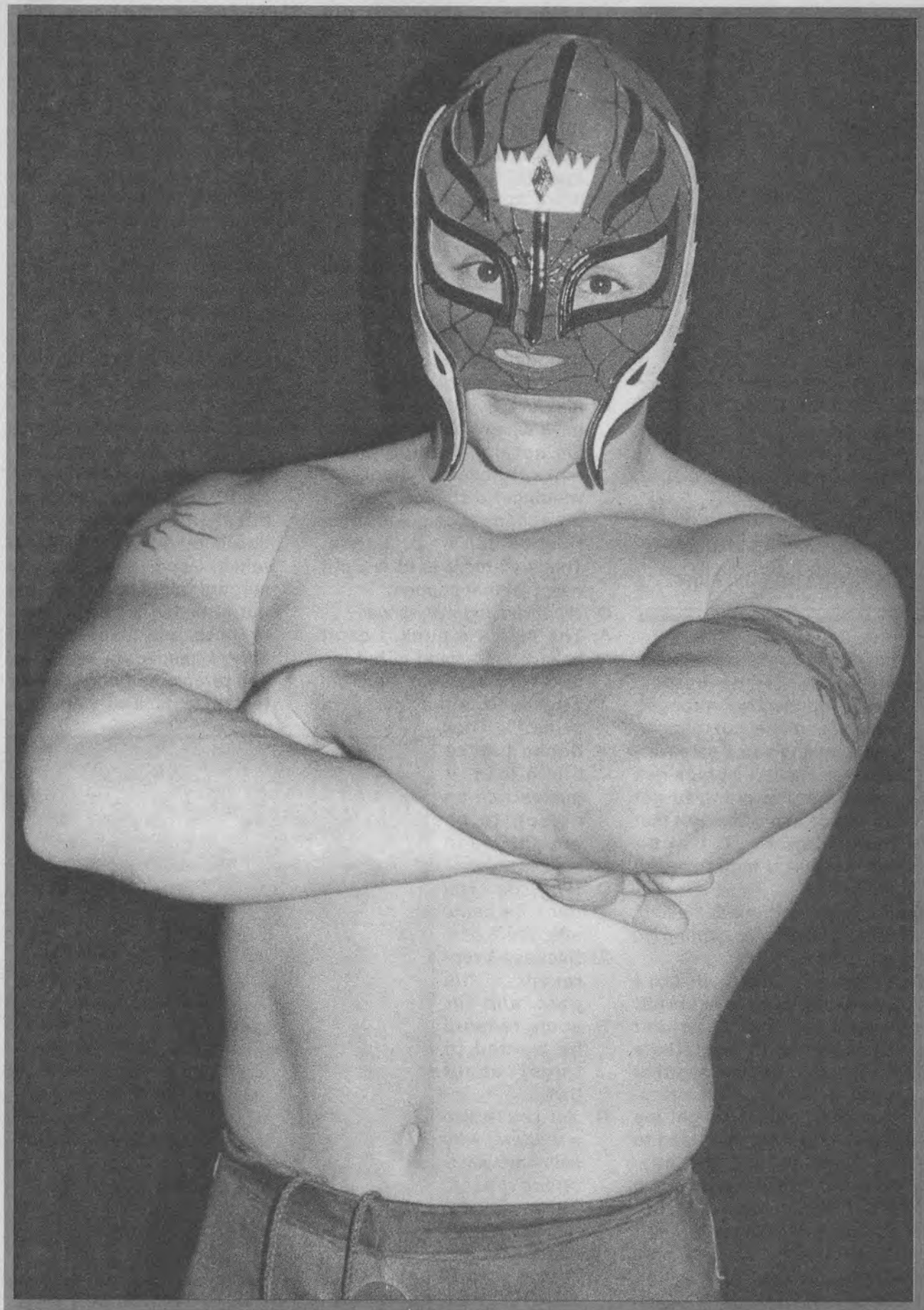
Q: Thank you for giving us some of your time, Rey. I know that it has been a difficult few months for you, but you seem to be coming back pretty well. You've racked up a few wins over Eddy Guerrero recently. Very impressive.

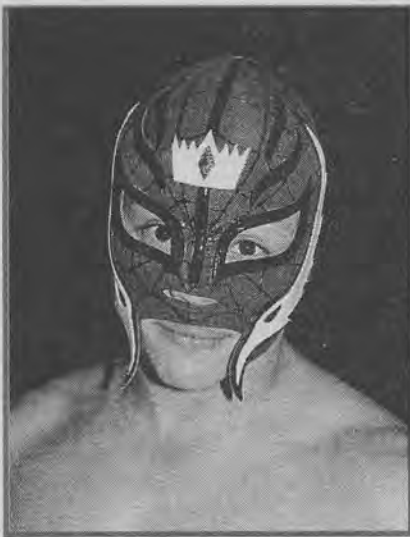
A: Thanks, Dave. You're right, these have been difficult

months for me, trying times, but that's the way it sometimes is in the world of professional wrestling, especially when you're not a big man. It's no secret to anyone that I'm one of the smallest men around, and when that's the case, you have to try a lot harder than everybody else. I can't get down just because I've suffered a few injuries.

Q: But they've been serious injuries. First you hurt your leg against Konnan, then you came back and he hurt your leg again, and then it looked like you might have to undergo surgery. I guess you were lucky.

A: Lucky, sure, but the doctor said that I was in great overall shape, which was the reason I was able to endure such punishment and still come back. But let's face it, Dave, I am the way I am, and I wrestle the way I wrestle. A guy like me isn't going to overpower anyone, and there are plenty of men these days who have all the moves. The trick is always staying a step ahead of them and never letting anyone get





"If I'm not going all-out at all times, I have no chance of winning. No chance. None. If my attitude is bad, if my confidence isn't up, I lose."

me down. That's what this is all about. Trying harder. Being tougher. Not stronger, which I can't be, but tougher, and showing some perseverance. I wrestle that high-risk style, and I'm going to get hurt once in a while. But that can't stop me. If I won't wrestle hurt, I might as well quit!

Q: So injuries come with the territory, and you're willing to accept that?

A: This isn't golf. It isn't chess. It's professional wrestling, the toughest sport known to man. There are people in this sport that want to hurt me. Take Konnan. He helped me get my break in wrestling. I used to be able to trust that guy. The truth is, I would have trusted him with my life. That's how strongly I felt about him. But things changed. When he joined the NWO, I was as shocked

as anyone else, but the NWO was throwing a lot of money around, and he got hooked. I guess Konnan's not as good a man as I thought he was. For some reason he had something against me and tried to drive me out of the sport, but it wasn't going to work.

Q: Yet he injured your leg.

A: Fine, but he didn't break my spirit. Nobody's ever gonna break my spirit. Not Konnan, not the NWO, not nobody.

Q: You have a great attitude.

A: It's the only attitude you can have when you're like me. If I'm not going all-out at all times, I have no chance of winning. No chance. None. If my attitude is bad, if my confidence isn't up, I lose. That's all there is to it. But I never let that happen.

Q: Were you angry at Konnan?

A: The man's a punk. I can't believe I'm saying it, but it's true. He's a sellout punk. All he proved is that he has a price. That doesn't make him a man. It makes him an object, to be bought and sold.

Q: Why do you think he came after you?

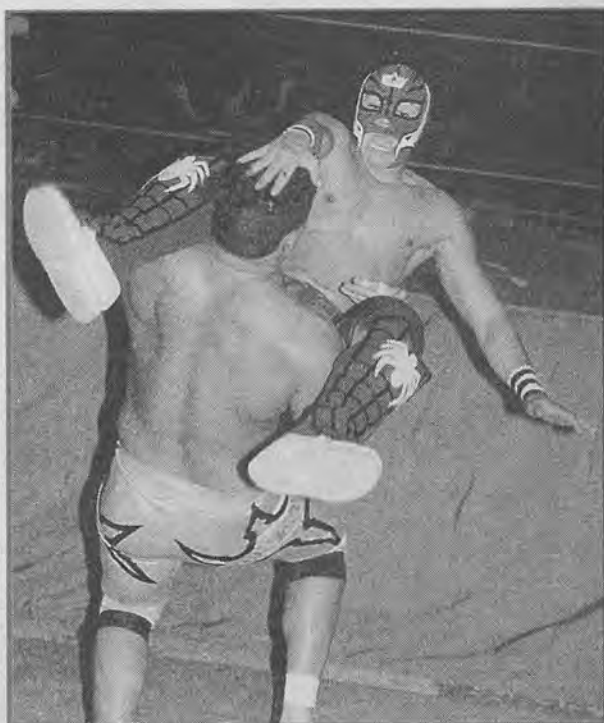
A: Because I represent his past, and for some reason, he wanted to forget about that.

Q: Yet you're two wrestlers who both have really strong ties to Mexico. Shouldn't the Mexican wrestlers be binding together in WCW?

A: You know, I've heard that, and for a while I agreed, but that's like saying all the white wrestlers should bind together, or all the American wrestlers should stay together, which is ridiculous. This isn't a team sport. It's wrestling, one-on-one, every man for himself, and the only goal is winning championships. Konnan went his own way. I didn't like it, but there's nothing I can do about it, except try to beat him, which is exactly what I'm going to do. I'll have my day.

Q: Well, how about the second time you got hurt?

A: That was when the doctors said I might need surgery, but then we found out we could take care of it with rehab. Good thing, because surgery might have kept me out of action for six months or more, and that's the last thing I needed. In wrestling, you're only as good as your last match, and people—



Rey Mysterio Jr. sets up Prince laukea for a "Frankensteiner," one of the many high-risk moves he uses on a regular basis. He's going to keep on using them, too.

especially promoters—tend to forget you quickly. Here I am moving up, finally making an impact and exciting people with my style, and the last thing I needed was



Misterio has had probably a dozen great matches with Juventud Guerrera since both joined WCW. He probably loves wrestling Guerrera because when doing so, he's only giving up two inches and 25 pounds.



six months off. Good thing it didn't happen.

Q: *Your rebound match was spectacular, beating Eddy Guerrero in an absolute war. I heard people saying it was one of the best matches they had seen all year.*

A: What did you think?

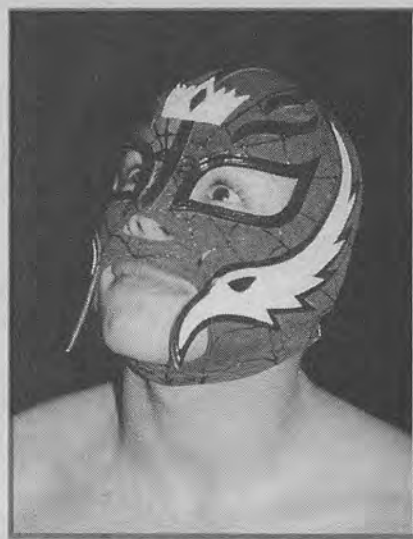
Q: *I agreed. It was a great match.*

A: Yeah, it was a great match, and that's because our styles complement each other. Beating Guerrero and wrestling such a great match was special, because it was on *Nitro* and millions of people were watching. You live for those nights, when everything works out perfectly, and what made it even better was that I got to try out my knee, and it turned out okay, too.

Q: *You felt good?*

A: Yeah, good. Not great, but good. It'll be a long time before my knee is perfect, maybe never. I guess the only way to recover completely would be to quit, but that's not going to happen. I don't plan on quitting for a long time. The way I see it, my career has just begun.

Q: *Well, as we go to press, you're right in the middle of the feud with Guerrero, who I take it is another man you used to have a lot of respect for. Is it discouraging to*



"I guess the only way to recover completely would be to quit, but that's not going to happen. I don't plan on quitting for a long time."

see all these guys you got to know well during your early days in Mexico turning against you?

A: Very. There are some guys you think will stand by you forever, but I guess you can't trust anyone in this sport 100 percent. People can change very fast. I can't stand what Eddy is doing right now. I don't know what happened or where he got this attitude of his, but it's got to go. I still have all the respect in the world for him as far as his wrestling ability goes, but not for him as a person.

Q: *So you're telling me that we'll never see Rey Misterio Jr. with an attitude like that?*

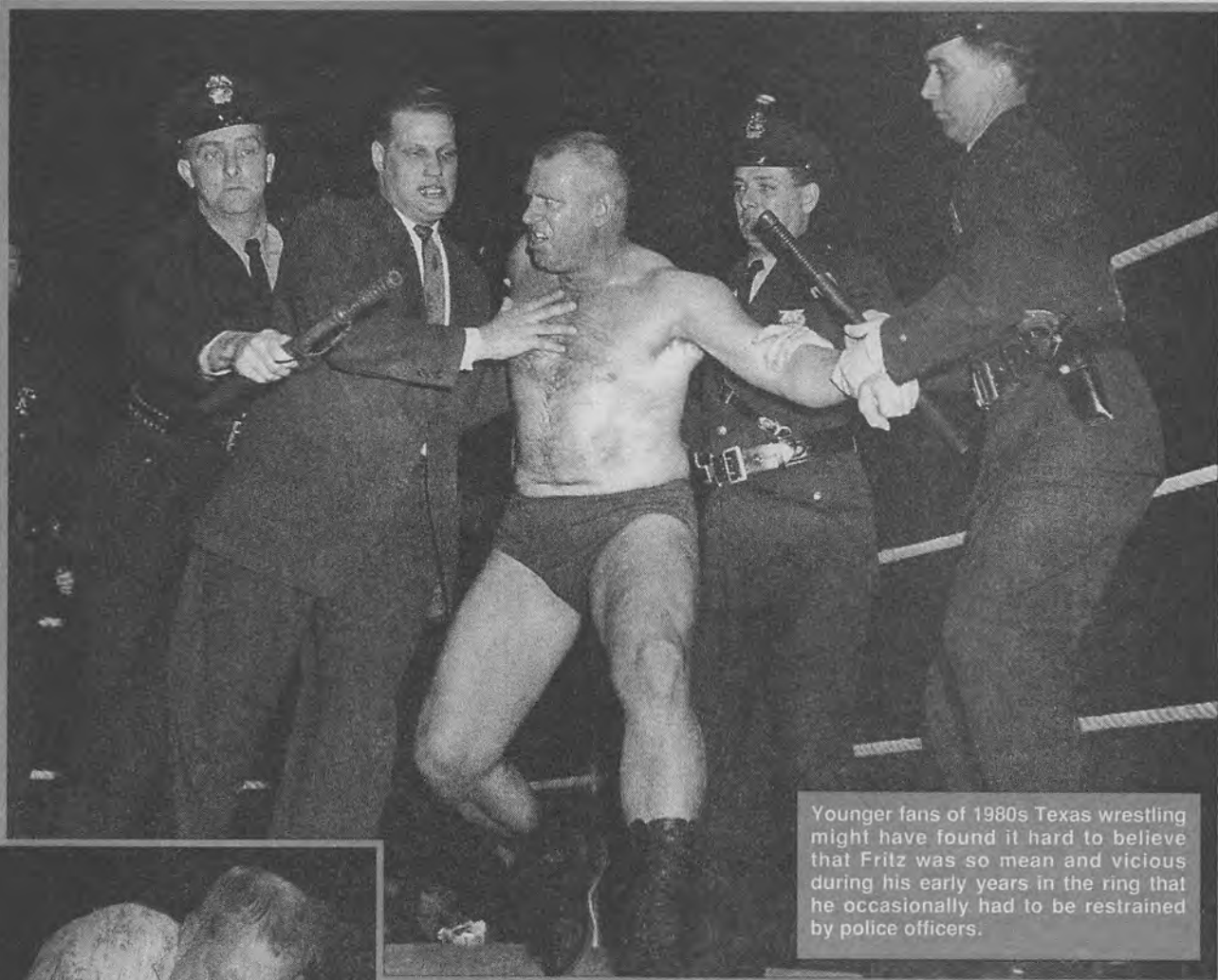
A: I hope not, because if I do start acting like that, you'll know there's something wrong with me, because that is not what Rey Misterio is all about. □

FRITZ VON ERICH DIES OF CANCER

The Tragic Saga Continues



Fritz Von Erich intimidated foes like Bobo Brazil with his iron claw when he was in his prime (above) and also as late as the mid-1980s, when he stunned even the bloodthirsty Abdullah the Butcher with the hold he made famous (opposite page, right).



Younger fans of 1980s Texas wrestling might have found it hard to believe that Fritz was so mean and vicious during his early years in the ring that he occasionally had to be restrained by police officers.



Fritz Von Erich, the patriarch of one of wrestling most famous and star-crossed families, died on September 10. He leaves behind only one remaining son, Kevin, and a lifetime of memories both very good and very, very bad

father saddened him deeply, maybe he's better equipped than the rest of us to handle such adversity. He is, after all, a Von Erich, and after a lifetime of family tragedies, his heart might just be a bit numb.

On September 10, 1997, Fritz Von Erich, died at age 68 in his Lake Dallas, Texas, home due to complications from his fight with cancer. Of his six children, only one, Kevin, was alive to mourn his death.

Fritz, who was born Jack Adkis-

son, was one of wrestling's most feared competitors in the 1950s and '60s, but will always be better known as the patriarch of wrestling's most famous, tragedy-ridden family. His suffering began in 1959 when his first-born son, Jackie, was accidentally electrocuted at the age of seven. He and his wife, Doris, turned to God to help them with their loss, and the couple was blessed with five more sons: Kevin, David, Kerry, Mike, and Chris.

The fact that the latter three all

By Dan Murphy

WHAT KEVIN VON ERICH is going through is not unlike what many of us have gone through, or will in the future. Though the death of his



A determined Fritz grabs Billy Lyons on the ring apron. He always hoped his sons could match the success he had. A few of them did very well, but then tragedy struck the clan again and again.



For a big man, Fritz was fairly agile in his heyday. Years from now, however, fans won't remember him for his agility. They'll remember him as the head of a family that made too many headlines for the wrong reasons.

took their own lives often led to speculation that Fritz had put undue pressure on his sons to follow his path into the most physically and mentally grueling of all sports.

all loved him."

In an interview with *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* in 1994, Kevin said: "We enjoyed ourselves to death. We were always showing off for each other. We

used to have this thing called the chance of the day, where we'd take a chance on our lives every day. Dave was always too smart for that, so he'd just watch. We'd jump on wild bulls' backs, jump on trains going fast. I almost got beheaded doing that. We'd get on the roof of a car at highway speed. You start thinking nothing can get you and you're indestructible. That's part of being in sports. We were blessed with



Fritz, Kerry, Kevin, and Mike pose with the World Class six-man tag team trophy. Sadly, of all the wrestling Von Erichs, only Kevin is alive today.

Kevin emphatically denies the allegation, laying the blame squarely on the shoulders of he and his brothers. "Our father told us he would support us whether we wanted to be wrestlers or firemen or race car drivers or whatever," Kevin said. "He loved us, and we

good bodies, good balance. We showed off for each other."

There wasn't as much pressure living up to their father's name as living up to each others' names. In the early- and mid-1980s, the family not only ruled Texas wrestling, but gained national and international acclaim through the TV syndication of *World Class Championship Wrestling*. David, the quiet, lanky defender of justice. Kevin, the barefooted aerial sensation. Kerry, the muscular master of the discus punch. Mike, the young lion with a heart seemingly as big as all of

THE WRESTLING VON ERICHs: A CHRONOLOGY OF TRAGEDY

1984. David Von Erich, 25, dies of acute enteritis—a severe intestinal inflammation—while touring Japan. It happens only weeks before he is to face NWA World champion Ric Flair at Texas Stadium in the biggest match of his life.

Kerry is chosen as his substitute, and with an emotionally charged crowd of 43,517 urging him on, he defeats Flair to win the NWA World title. On the same card, Fritz comes out of retirement at the age of 55 to help Kevin and Mike defeat The Freebirds in a wild six-man tag bout. Eighteen days later, how-

ever, Flair regains the belt.

1987. After suffering through a lengthy bout with toxic shock syndrome, Mike, 23, commits suicide by overdosing on the tranquilizer Placidyl. That same year, Kerry is in a motorcycle accident and undergoes surgery to fuse the bones in his right ankle. Doctors say he will never again compete.

1991. After having difficulty in mid-card matches, Chris, 21, commits suicide by shooting himself. He reportedly leaves a note that says, "Dear Mom, you've always been wonderful. I'm in a better place, and Dave

and I will be watching."

1993. After winning and losing the WWF Intercontinental title, Kerry is arrested for forging a prescription to painkillers. A day after being indicted on a cocaine possession charge, Kerry, 33, also commits suicide, leaving behind a note to Kevin that reads, "I am going to be with David, Mike, and Chris."

"I love my brothers, and I will always love my brothers," Kevin said. "I pray for them everyday, and I ask for the prayers of everyone who cheered them on over the years."

—Dan Murphy

Texas. (Chris, the youngest, began his career after the family name had already been tarnished and the promotion was in decline).

By all outward appearances,

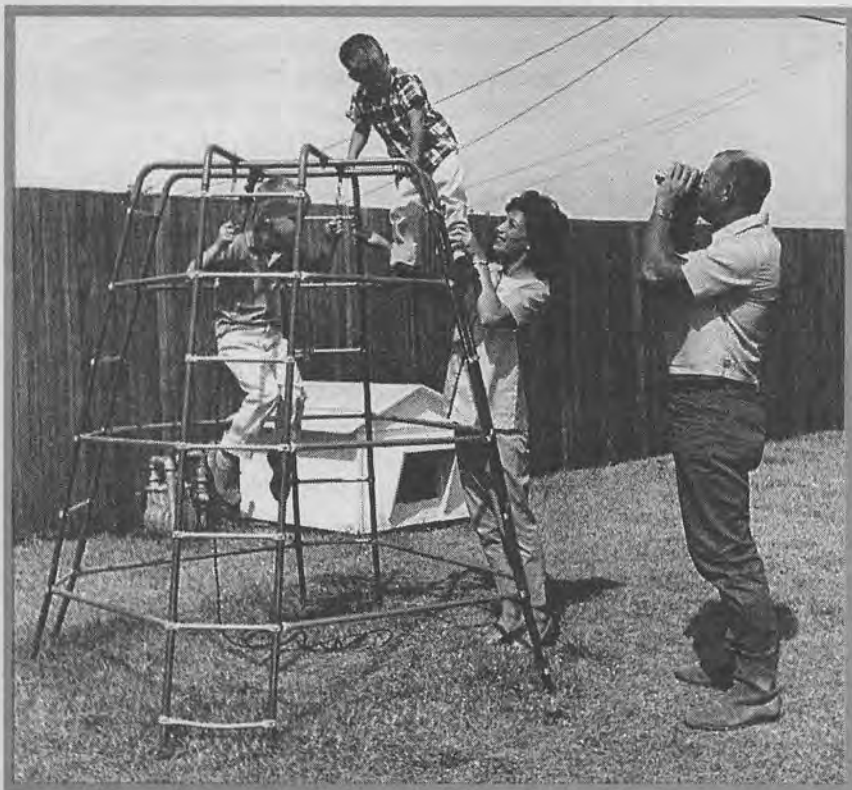
the boys loved their family, their fans, their sport, and their God. But inner turmoil infected them all. And their legacy would not be one of athletic superiority, but of pain, despair, and death.

Through all this, Fritz remained a rock. But Doris, tortured over her sons' deaths, divorced him in 1992 after 43 years of marriage.

For the last two years of his life, Fritz lived alone. He was diagnosed with lung cancer in late-July. Shortly thereafter, doctors discovered it had spread to his brain and adrenal glands. By the time the cancer was detected, it was impossible to treat.

As frail as he had become in the final days, it was hard to believe that this was the same man who had terrorized opponents with his "iron claw" through a career that spanned 35 years. Although he captured the AWA World championship from Verne Gagne on July 27, 1963, the highlight of his professional and personal life was watching the emergence of his sons, his promotion, and his state as one of the sport's hotbeds.

"The world of wrestling has lost a true legend in every sense of the word," said Kevin, who is retired from the sport at age 39. "My father taught us to do our best, to love God and love ourselves. That's something I will always strive to do." □



During a happy, carefree day, Fritz and wife Doris look on as little Kerry and Kevin play. They had no idea at this point that their lives would be filled with so much heartache.

The telephone wires sizzle each month, as two top wrestlers voice their rage and hostility toward each other. Here's the unedited transcript of their conversation, your chance to feel the raw emotion that results when two antagonists face off ... One On One

ONE ON ONE

AHMED JOHNSON FEARED that the day might come when his friend Rocky Maivia joined the Nation of Domination, but he hoped against hope that it would never happen. Johnson was Maivia's mentor and always tried to teach him the right things. He tried to set an example for Maivia. But Johnson had joined the Nation once, too, and knew that Maivia might one day decide that what was good for the teacher was good for the student.

That day did arrive this summer. Ahmed was sidelined with a knee injury when Maivia pulled off the dirty deed that changed both their lives. Maivia slid into the ring and slammed a chair across the face of Chainz, the foe of NOD leader Faarooq. Right then and there, it was clear that Maivia had made his decision.

Over the following weeks, Faarooq pointed out that Maivia had followed in Johnson's footsteps, and that Ahmed was to blame for Maivia's transformation. Well, maybe, but Ahmed had often warned Maivia about the NOD. "They'll ruin you," he said. "I tried to change them, but they can't be changed."

It didn't matter what Ahmed said, however, because Maivia was going through the toughest period of his young career. He had been losing matches one after another, then was sidelined for months by a knee injury. The fans, who thought he was too nice, started booing him relentlessly, and Maivia couldn't take it. He decided to look elsewhere for support and a career boost.

So mentor and student are now sworn enemies. Maivia is certain he made the right decision. Ahmed is certain that Maivia will one day regret

what he has done. It's a perfect situation under which to bring these men together ... "One On One."

AHMED JOHNSON: Rocky, I knew this day might come, but I still don't understand. How could you?

ROCKY MAIVIA: You know what this is all about. You're the reason I joined the Nation of Domination.

AJ: I told you all about how bad the Nation was ...

RM: Yeah, but you joined anyway, and you'd still be with them if they hadn't thrown you out. You weren't close to good enough or tough enough for the Nation of Domination. That's the bottom line, Ahmed, and don't try to deny it.

AJ: Well, if you ain't gonna listen to what I say, there's nothing I can do, but I never joined the Nation of Domination to go along with their program. They

were setting the wrong example, showing off men of color in the wrong light, and I wanted to change them ...

RM: That's not the way I saw it. You just wanted to cash a bigger paycheck.

AJ: That's not true. I thought I could change them from within, since I couldn't change them from the outside. But I learned the truth. Faarooq can't be changed. He's an evil man who's trying to take a shortcut to the top. He doesn't give a damn about you.

RM: Faarooq has a large bank account.

AJ: Is that all that matters, money? What happened to your values? Didn't I teach you anything?

RM: Yeah, you taught me about grabbing opportunity when it comes, which is what this is about. They made me an offer; I accepted it. What was I supposed to do, go on getting booed by



"You weren't close to good enough or tough enough for the Nation of Domination. That's the bottom line, Ahmed, and don't try to deny it."
—Rocky Maivia

N ONE



"They got you fooled ... Rocky, I hate to see this stuff happening to you, but I learned a long time ago not to try to change what can't be changed."

—Ahmed Johnson

those stupid fans? You told me if I did things your way, I'd always have respect and that was what mattered most. Well, I did things your way and the fans booed me anyway, because they don't appreciate how great an athlete I am. Those people aren't worth anything. I would've had to have been crazy to keep on living with that.

AJ: I wasn't talking about respect from other people. I was talking about self-respect.

RM: The truth is, Ahmed, you never had any idea what you were talking about, so why don't you take that lame "Pearl River Plunge" of yours and stick it ...

AJ: That "Pearl River Plunge" of mine hurt you pretty good a few weeks ago when I beat you. Another one might do you some more good. It might teach you a lesson, because that's what you need right now, a lesson in respect

for yourself and others. You might think things are going well for you now, but you're never gonna get a shot at the WWF title. One of these days Faarooq is gonna decide he doesn't need you, or Kama Mustafa, or D-Lo. He'll dump all you guys, you watch.

RM: There's no truth to that.

AJ: Yeah, how do you know?

RM: Because Faarooq told me we're in this together for the long haul, and I trust him. A lot more than I trust you.

AJ: Hey, man, you can say what you want, but I never lied to you.

RM: That's bull! You lied to me plenty. You lied when you said the fans would never boo me, you lied when you said I'd be on top of the world in no time at all, and you lied when you said the Nation had nothing to offer me. The Nation of Domination is the best thing that ever happened to me. Everybody said I was doing the wrong

thing. Even my father said I was doing the wrong thing, but he now admits that he was wrong and I was right. What was I supposed to do, keep following the same bad path?

AJ: That path might have been crooked, and maybe it took you in directions you didn't want to go some of the time, but it was headed toward the right destination. I thought you understood that.

RM: The only thing I understood was that you liked being my mentor and having me as your student, because that kept me below you. I didn't realize that at first, but Faarooq helped me figure that out.

AJ: Sounds to me like Faarooq did a pretty good brainwashing job on you. How'd you let him get to you like that?

RM: It sounds to me like you're just a bitter man who got thrown out on his butt by the Nation and now thinks that everything they do is wrong. They tried to help you, but you wouldn't go along with the program. You tried to sabotage everything. I'm not trying to change the Nation of Domination, and they're not trying to change me. We're all in this for each other.

AJ: Go ahead, believe that if you want, but they got you fooled. And if it's hopeless, it's hopeless. Rocky, I hate to see this stuff happening to you, but I learned a long time ago not to try to change what can't be changed. Yeah, this heartbreaking ...

RM: Spare me the melodrama, Ahmed. In fact, just shut the hell up. I'm tired of listening to your endless babble. I don't have to listen to anybody.

AJ: You forgot. Except for Faarooq. You gotta listen to him.

RM: He advises, and I take what I need. That's what it's all about. At least Faarooq never did something, then told everybody to do something else entirely. He's a man of his word. You're not.

AJ: You can believe that if you want, too. Like I said, I can't change people. But if I could, I'd change you.

RM: No thanks, everything is fine just the way it is.

AJ: No, it's not, and I still planning on taking down the Nation of Domination, and you with it.

RM: You'll die trying, Ahmed. □

Did you ever wonder how YOU could get into Pro Wrestling?

Maybe as a valet, manager or even a wrestler?
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Sincerely Yours

(Continued from page 5)

Despite their ballooning popularity and exposure, the NWO must realize their contempt and disregard for authority will ultimately be their downfall. Several public arguments have already transpired. In fact, realizing the error of their sinful ways, Ted DiBiase and Ray Traylor have walked away from the cult-like NWO. Perhaps when they run out of those "cool" catch phrases, more members will realize that the NWO is just 4 now!

STAN R. LENKIEWICZ
Paramus, NJ

ANOTHER CHANCE

Chris Candido may think he's better off back in ECW, but I don't think he should give up on the WWF so quickly ("Hotseat," November 1997). Even though he didn't make the great impact he thought he would, he did win the WWF World tag team title, which is something most wrestlers will never achieve during their careers. Candido needs to realize that there were circumstances that muddled his ability to fully blossom in the WWF, and most of them were created by Sunny and the fact that he was still very young when he went to the WWF.

Even though Candido already has a lot of experience, many fans tend to forget that he is still young. No amount of experience can fully make up for maturity. I am not knocking either Chris or Sunny one bit. I just think it was a matter of too much too quickly for two young people to take.

Chris might be skeptical about

ever returning to the WWF, but I think if he does return, he'll better understand what he needs to do in order to become a superstar.

MIKE DOUGHERTY
White Plains, NY

ACT OF KINDNESS

I think INSIDE WRESTLING should give more attention to Devon Storm, because he deserves it. Not only is he a great wrestler, but he also treats the fans well. I recently met him at an Int'l Pro Wrestling card at Conestoga Valley High School, and he took the time to sign an autograph for a paraplegic boy for no charge, which is something most others didn't do. After the show, Devon went back to see the boy, chatted with him, and shook his hand before leaving.



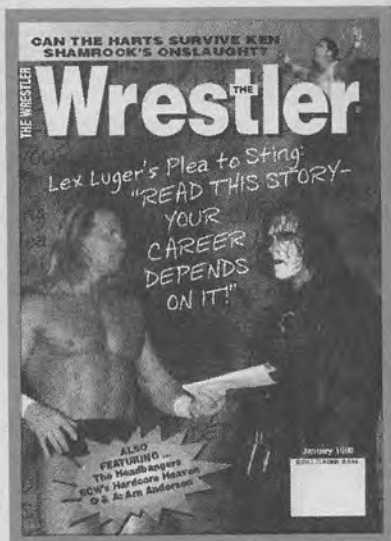
Devon Storm prepares to drive his leg into the leg of Glen Osbourne. Reader Michelle Hutchinson recently met Storm and was impressed by how nice he was.

That simple act of kindness put Devon at the top of my list and won him a special place in my heart. If his kindness toward others isn't good enough to earn him an interview with this magazine, then I don't know what will be.

MICHELLE HUTCHINSON
Lancaster, PA ☐

This Month In...

THE Wrestler



It appears **STING** will finally get his match with **HULK HOGAN** at Starrcade. **LEX LUGER** is thrilled for his friend, but he's worried that Sting will underestimate Hogan.

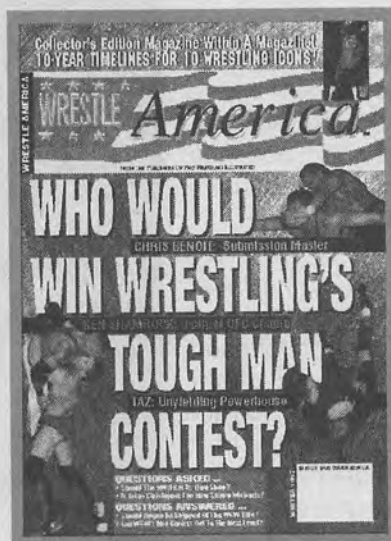
That's why he penned a story in our magazine and is insisting that Sting read it ... Is **THE HART FOUNDATION** beginning to crumble? **KEN SHAMROCK** hopes so.

The way we see it, **BRET HART**, **OWEN HART**, and **DAVEY BOY SMITH** might not be able to handle Shamrock's one-man onslaught ... **HARDCORE HEAVEN** wasn't the rousing success ECW hoped it would be. But did it reverse ECW's momentum?

All this—and much more!—
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NOW ON SALE!

On The Road

(Continued from page 10)

one—and dug his feet into the soft, white sand as he took a bite out of his sandwich. It was a peaceful day in St. Petersburg, perfect for thinking and reflecting, and Johnson was deep in thought. A few people strolled past where we sat and called out, "Hey, Rocky," but Johnson didn't seem to hear them. He had too much on his mind.

"He came home, and we just sat around and talked for days," Johnson said. "I told him I didn't trust this Faarooq character, and he told me that at first he didn't trust him, either, but he changed his mind.

"I said, 'Was it the money that made you change your mind, because if it was, you've been led down the wrong trail.'

"He said, 'Dad, the money's part of it, but Faarooq has the right ideas. He knows where he wants to go. He's formed the strongest group in wrestling, and everybody who's involved is going to benefit.' So I told him, 'That's where you're mistaken, son. Only Faarooq is going to benefit. You just wait and see.'"

"Do you really think this is so bad?" Maivia asked his father.

"It's terrible," Johnson said. "It might be the worst thing you've ever done."

"Well, I'm sorry, Dad," Maivia said. "It's something I have to do."

This left Rocky Johnson heartbroken, but he still loved his son and was willing to keep an open mind. So for the next few weeks,

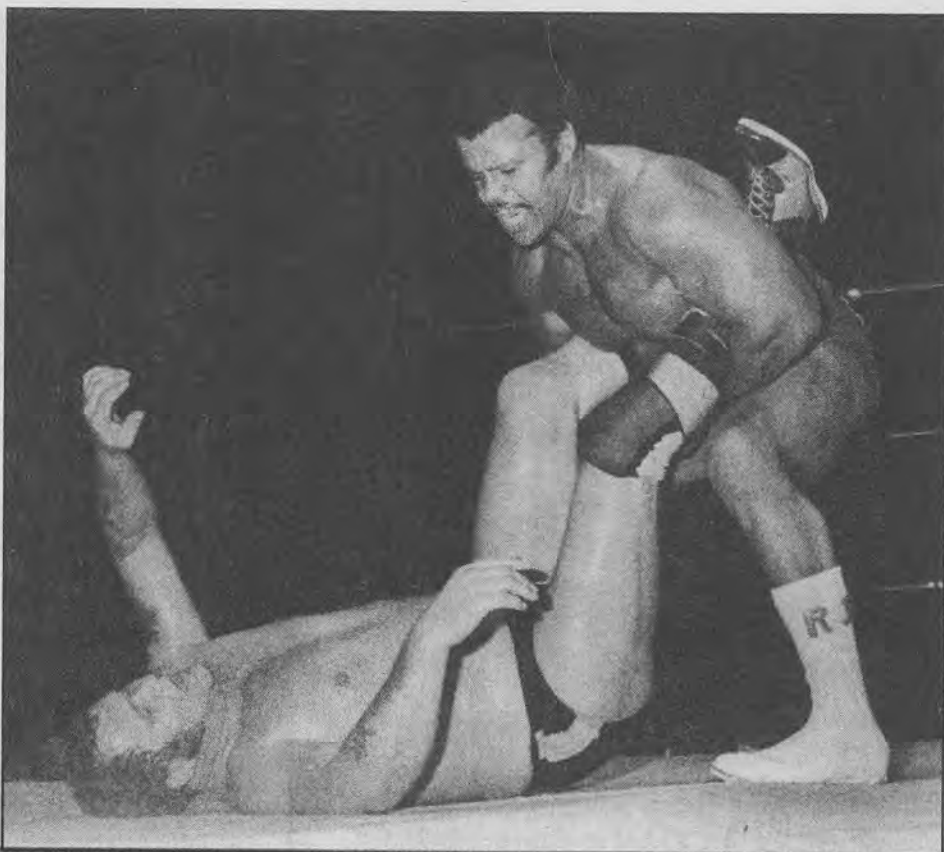
he watched his son carefully, from afar, on TV. And little by little, he realized that his son had made the right decision after all.

"Here's the thing," Johnson said. "People were booing him. His career really wasn't going the way it should have been going. He needed some kind of change, some kind of support, and the Nation of Domination was there for him. They've given him a lot more confidence. I know people say, 'That Nation of Domination is a bad group,' and I can see why they say that, but they've been good for my son. These people who booed Rocky, he doesn't need them. And as for the rules, let's face it, the rules are set up to benefit the people in charge. At

that point in time, Rocky wasn't in charge, but he's getting there. The Nation of Domination is going to help him a lot. Maybe there will soon be a time when he won't need the Nation."

Johnson kept speaking about that time as if he couldn't wait for it to arrive, but there was no sorrow in his voice. He finished the last of his tea, took the last bite of his sandwich, got up, and started walking in the direction of the sun. It was nearly 3:00, and there were four hours of daylight remaining, but Johnson had done his thinking for the day.

"After all," he said, "the last time, I thought a little too much. Maybe next time I'll let Rocky do my thinking for me." □



Rocky Johnson (shown against Harley Race) didn't think much of gangs or cliques when he was an active competitor. He's still not sure he likes NOD leader Faarooq, but he thinks the NOD has helped his son.

Behind the Door

(Continued from page 12)



Fritz uses his iron claw on Pepper Gomez en route to capturing the Texas heavy-weight title in 1965. He was a strong, tough, demanding man, but he did want the best for all the members of his family.

totally prepared for something like that."

It's interesting that Kevin viewed his father as a rock, because that was the public's perception of Fritz Von Erich, too. He was seen as a hard, demanding man who may have pushed his sons too hard by putting too much weight on their shoulders, by insisting that they live up to the Von Erich name and become heroes. For most of his sons, that was too much of a burden, but Kevin, who bore the burden better than any of them, insisted it was love, not pride or hardness, that drove Fritz to drive his sons.

"I know that's how people saw it," Kevin said. "I heard people talking. Sure, I tried to ignore it, but you can't help but hear the things people are saying and writing. It's hurtful. I mean, people were trying to explain what happened to our family, and they didn't even know our family, other than rumors and from what they

saw on TV. You shouldn't believe all of that stuff. Let me tell you something, we were a close family, and we all loved each other. My father always wanted the best for us."

Kevin goes on to recall the elation he and his brothers felt every time they brought a title home.

"The NWA title, the Missouri title, the Texas title, any title, they all made my dad so proud. To tell you the truth, whenever we won a belt, I truly believe he felt a sense of accomplishment even more than we did. There was a special gleam in his eye because he was proud to be our father, but also proud for being our coach and trainer. Dad was a rock, as I said before, an almost unmovable rock, but when we won the gold, the rock moved."

There were other times, like when Kerry won the NWA World title, and Kevin thought he saw his father crying. Fritz wiped his eyes when Kevin walked into the room,

and Kevin asked him, "Dad, are you okay?" Fritz barked, "Of course I'm okay. Now just leave me alone for a moment." Fritz was not going to let his son see him cry, but he did cry. He had emotions, too.

"We were a very emotional family," Kevin said. "It's all about emotion, about feeling things too much, and we got that from our parents. You know, it's funny the way I'm talking about my family in the past tense, as if it doesn't exist anymore, but it does. Even when people are gone, they're still with you. I'll still look to my family for strength and support.

"And you know what? They'll be there for me, just like they always have been."

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The Insider

(Continued from page 14)

I think Disco could probably kick Eddy Guerrero's butt if that's what he decided he wanted to do. His confidence level is soaring ... and for good reason.



was standing when the disco dancer held the armpit dancer's shoulders to the mat for three seconds. Oh, sure, Jacquelyn tried to thrust her huge chest toward Disco and actually challenge him immediately after his win, but he would not be deterred. This was his night to celebrate.

As he returned to the backstage area with his TV belt, he announced to the press corps that he needed a few minutes to collect his thoughts. Five minutes later, I entered his dressing room. Never having been in an arena in Utah, I didn't know that disco balls were part of the decor in the dressing rooms. Then again ...

There he was. The sweat-soaked Disco Inferno with the belt

draped over his broad left shoulder. Being in the presence of greatness, I hardly noticed that I was the only journalist in the room.

"All right, quiet down," Disco said to the masses (me) as he stepped to the podium. "I have a formal statement to make, and then I will open the floor to questions."

He cleared his throat and took a drink of New Coke (do they still make this stuff?).

"I would say that I'm undeserving, but we all know that it isn't true," Disco asserted. "This is only the first step in the 1997 Disco Inferno World Tour. Soon, all belts in WCW will be mine. It won't be the New World Order. It will be the Disco World Order. No Dungeon of Doom. Try Dungeon of Disco.

Four Horsemen? How about Four Infernos. I will take over WCW, or should I say DCW—Disco Championship Wrestling."

Okay, so he was getting a little carried away. But I had to admire his ambition. For so long, he was considered a joke in WCW. But when he left, a lot of WCW fans discovered that they actually missed him. He became one of the most popular and sought-after wrestlers on the indy circuit. WCW noticed this, and soon he was back.

"Any questions?" Disco asked as he looked at the members of the media (me) assembled in the room.

"One question, Disco," I inquired. "Being the trendsetter you are and now a champion, do you expect imitators to start coming out of the woodwork?"

"Good question, Ms. Mankiewicz," he replied (he pronounced it MAN-Kee-Witz rather than MAN-kev-itch, which is correct, but that was okay). "Of course. Everyone wants to be like me. Do you honestly think that '70s styles would have made this resurgence if it weren't for me. Sideburns, wide-collared shirts, The Bee Gees. Do you honestly think that any of that would have come back into fashion if it weren't for me, Disco Inferno, the new WCW TV champion?"

It's hard to disagree with a man with such a convincing argument.

With that, the press conference was over. Disco and his new belt left out the side door. I walked out of the dressing room to a throng of reporters chasing down "Diamond" Dallas Page, The Giant, and Lex Luger. I didn't bother. I got what I wanted. I was part of history. I'll always remember where I was the day Disco Inferno became a champion for the first of what should be many times in WCW.

If only it wasn't Salt Lake City. □

On Assignment

(Continued from page 16)

On the other channel, if Sting drops from the rafters, record numbers of fans tune in. But if La Parka hooks it up with Vincent, you'll see some *Nitro* viewers run screaming into the night ... or switch over to *Raw*.

While we seem to be getting bogged down in the minutia, the breakdown does reveal a lot about fan interest and shows the people who run the shows what causes viewers to change channels. The question is, why the fascination? Why are fans so obsessed with the numbers side of wrestling as opposed to who's feuding with whom?

The interest lies directly on the floor of the lush offices of WCW in Atlanta. The new kid on the block knocking off the big bully is news. As I said, I never thought *Nitro* would succeed. Eric Bischoff, Ted Turner, and company were just posturing, I figured, and soon *Nitro* would disappear or be moved to a different night.

But less than a year after *Nitro* made its debut, it was the number-one weekly wrestling show in the nation. WCW did all the right things to make it a success. It went live each week. It threw around millions of dollars to secure the services of great wrestlers such as Lex Luger, Kevin Nash, and Scott Hall. It was in one way fortunate to be the home of Hulk Hogan's heinous betrayal and the promotion in which he subsequently formed the New World Order. All were ingredients to success.

In recent months, WCW has increased its ratings lead. But the people who run the federation are still not satisfied. I don't think they'll be happy until they force the WWF to move *Raw* to another night. Some people think that's what will eventually happen.



Sting has dropped from the rafters and is in the ring ... live on *Nitro*. The WCW executives are excited! Why? Not just because he's likely to attack the NWO, but also because he'll help boost the ratings.

The fans are impressed with more than just the talent rosters. They are basing their opinions on the almighty ratings. Who would have thought that wrestling would have become a numbers game?

So the WWF is down, but I don't think it is out. While WCW is writing the WWF's epitaph with each ratings victory, Vince McMahon and company are regrouping, bound and determined to overcome the odds. After all, WCW did it when most said it could not.

That is why I believe that in one year, *Raw* will again be the higher-rated program. This is not an attempt on my part to diminish what WCW has done or will do in the future. But McMahon is at his most dangerous when his back is against the wall. The very nationalization of the WWF in the mid-1980s was a big crapshoot for him, but he pulled it off. *WrestleMania* could have flopped, and the WWF could have suffered the same fate the AWA, SMW, and UWF have, but it didn't.

So in this battle, I'll take the risk-taker. In the meantime, the war will rage on. Fans and reporters like me will continue to watch with great interest. But we won't be fascinated just by the competitiveness in the ring. We'll be just as focused on Ken Shamrock drawing a 2.7 in the third quarter hour of *Raw* and Marcus Bagwell sinking *Nitro*'s ratings to a 1.9 in the seventh quarter hour.

The most powerful person in wrestling: A.C. Nielsen. □

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March 1991: The Earthquake Feud Rumbles On: Will Hulk Hogan Be The Victim Of His Own Deadly Obsession? Also: Roberts-Martel, Sting-Hansen, Keim-Perez, Barry Windham.

April 1991: The Steiners: They're Be Wrestling's Greatest Tag Team, But ... Also: Eddie Gilbert, Flair-Sting, Steiners, Roddy Piper, Larry Zbyszko, Sgt. Slaughter.

May 1991: Savage vs. Warrior: The Bloodlust Of Ex-Champions. Also: Steiners, Sting, Virgil, D. Sammartino-L. Koloff.

June 1991: Steiners, LOD: Tag Team Thunder. Also: Steve Williams, Nikita Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees, Arn Anderson.

July 1991: Hogan's Burning Mad! Beating Slaughter For The Title Was Not Enough. Also: Virgil, Hystis, Steiners, Dan Spivey, Terry Funk.

August 1991: Are The Steiners Getting Too Cocky For Their Own Good? Also: Jerry Lawler, Rick Steamboat, Warrior-Undertaker, Dustin Rhodes, Flair-Windham.

September 1991/Justice Is In The WWF ... And Hogan's In The Biggest Trouble Of His Life! Also: Missy-Paul E., Rick Rude, Curt Hennig, Stevie Ray, Diamond Exchange.

October 1991: Exclusive Preview & Analysis: SummerSlam '91. Also: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Leg Luger, Santana-Atlas, Steve Williams, Studd-Zenk.

November 1991: Our Investigation Reveals ... The Truth Behind The Hogan-Savage Connection. Also: Lex Luger, Ric Flair, War Games, Mounties, foreign objects.

December 1991: A Night To Remember: SummerSlam Provides Heat For The Cold Months Ahead. Also: Alexandra York, Simmons-Luger, Lane & Cornette, Leatherface.

January 1992: Inside Wrestling Reveals: Sting's Memo From A Maniac! Also: Freebirds, Blackhearts, Bret Hart, Dusty Rhodes, Mike Rotundo.

February 1992: A Reign Of Pain: Lex Luger—The Agony Of A World Champion. Also: Bret Hart, Patriot, Rick Rude, Enforcers, Thesz & Rogers.

March 1992: Who's Winning The Hogan-Flair Wars? Also: Steiners, Survivor Series, Enforcers-Rhodes & Steamboat, Johnny B. Badd.

May 1992: War! WrestleMania Will Be Sid And Hulk's Battleground. Also: Justin Liger, Eddie Gilbert, Repo Man, Austin-Blossom, Tri-State & UWF.

June 1992: Sting: A New Champion, A New Era. Also: Hulk Hogan, Harley Race, Marcus Bagwell, Tony Atlas, IRS & DiBiosa.

July 1992: Is Regaining The WWF Title An Impossible Undertaking? Also: Sheri & Shawn, Big Van Vader, Gordy & Williams, Kamala, Joe Savoldi.

August 1992: The Closer Flair Gets ... The More Savage "Macho Man" Becomes. Also: Jack-Bodd, Brian Christopher, LOD & Ellering, Taylor & Valentine, Dusty Wolfe.

September 1992: Hulk Hogan's "Retirement": Why The WWF Will Never Let Him Rest In Peace. Also: War Games, Big Van Vader, Kamala, Marty Jannetty, U.K.

October 1992: SummerSlam '92: Exclusive Preview & Analysis. Also: S. Steiner-Muto, Ron Simmons, Eddie Gilbert, Eric Embry.

November 1992: The Great American Crash: Vader Crushes Sting For The WCW World Title. Also: Ric Flair, Ultimate Warrior, Madusa, Warlord & Barbarian-Bushwhackers, top rope rule.

December 1992: Hey, Ric Flair: Stop Whining And Start Winning. Also: Ragan Ramon, Heavenly Bodies, Jeff Jarrett, Windham & D. Rhodes, NWA title.

January 1993 (Special Edition): 80,355 Fans Can't Be Wrong: This Was The Greatest SummerSlam Ever! Also: WWF-USWA, LOD, Sting-Simmons, Bret-Shango, Rude-Dustin.

March 1993: Who Controls The Balance Of Power In The WWF? Also: Shawn Michaels, Nikita Koloff, Windham-Dustin, Survivor Series, Rod Price.

April 1993: New Blood! The Wrestlers Who Could Revitalize The WWF In '93. Plus: Z-Man & Gunn, Sting-Vader, Dangerous Alliance, Ric Flair.

May 1993: Exclusive WrestleMania IX Match Analysis. Also: Andre the Giant, Pillman & Austin, Great Muta, Headshrinkers-Steiners, 2 Cold Scorpio.

July 1993: Davey Boy Smith Dogs Big Van Vader: Could Bret Hart Be Next? Plus: Dino Bravo, Giant Gonzales, Razor Ramon, Arn Anderson, Dustin-Cactus-Rude, Tatanka.

August 1993: Hulk Hogan vs. Yokozuna: The "Hulkster" Faces His Biggest Challenge Ever! Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Maxx Payne, Sid Vicious, Cactus-Vader, Bret Hart.

November 1993: Flair ("I'm The Man Again") vs. Rude ("You Mean You Were The Man."):

Plus: Heavenly Bodies, Marty Jannetty, Rude-Flair, Hulk Hogan, Vader & Vicious, Lex Luger.

December 1993: "The Next Hulk Hogan": Why Lex Luger Will Succeed Where Warrior And Savage Failed. Plus: Tammy Fytch, Steve Austin, Yokozuna, Sting & Flair, Tito Santana, Luna Vachon.

January 1994 (Special Issue): Wrestling's Seasonal Spectacular! WWF's SummerSlam, WCW's Fall Brawl. Plus: Rick Martel, Missy Hyatt, Razor-Schyster, Steven Regal, Orndorff-Flair, Mascara-Liger.

February 1994: Our Holiday Wish List For 1994. Plus: Hogan-Savage-Bret, Hackshaw Duggan, Doink, Hollywood Blonds, Steven Regal.

March 1994: Inside Wrestling Predicts: What's In Store For '94. Plus: Nastys & Missy, Col. Parker, Ludvig Borge, chairs, Survivor Series, Diesel-Michaels.

April 1994 (Special Issue): The Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Lex Luger, Starrcade, Yoko-Fuji, Ric Flair, Curt Hennig, Funk-Sabu.

May 1994: Lex Luger & Bret Hart: Their Greatest Triumphs, Their Gravest Tragedies. Also: Flair-Rude, Rick Morton, Heenan-Backwinkel, Brian Christopher, Yoko-Booger.

June 1994: Wake Up, Rick Steamboat: Ric Flair Is Still "Slick" Ric! Also: Jimmy Snuka, Tony Anthony, IRS, Bruise Brothers, Alundra Blayze, Freebirds.

July 1994 (Special Issue): A Look Into Wrestling's Future: You Won't Believe What You'll See! Also: Ron Simmons, Sting, Earthquake-Booger, Bob Armstrong, Diesel.

August 1994: 10 Years After Rock 'n' Wrestling: It's Time For Roddy To Get Rowdy Again! Also: Hulk Hogan, 911, Freebirds, rulebreakers, Cornette & Bodies, Bushwhackers.

September 1994: The Resurrection Of The Undertaker. Also: Nastys-Cactus & Maxx, Flair-Steamboat, Nikolai Volkoff, Rock 'n' Rolls, Luna Vachon.

October 1994 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Doink, Vader-Race, Mabel, Dory Funk Jr., Owen-Bret, Hall of Fame.

December 1994: Hogan In Paradise ... And Ric Flair Feels The Thunder. Also: Bret-Owen, Rotiens, Cactus, AAA midgets, Sparky Plugg, Doni E. Allen.

February 1995: It's Getting Ugly: Wrestling's Losing Its Greatest Heroes. Also: Sting, McMahon-Lawler, Cactus-Tammy, Woman, Brutus-Hogan, Valentine-Doink.

March 1995: Predictions 1995. Also: Nastys, Razor Ramon, Tasmaniac, Kid-Man O'-War, Pillman & Hogan.

April 1995 (Special Issue): The 1995 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament! Also: Diesel,

Vader-Austin, Lex Luger, Jerry Lawler, Johnny B. Badd, Al Snow.

June 1995: The Beginning Of The End? Will Hulk Hogan Get Burned By Friendly Fire? Also: Steve Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy, Bret-Owen, Jeff Jarrett.

July 1995 (Special Issue): Wrestling Cool!!! What's In—And Why—In The Mat Sport Today. Also: Savage & Sting, Alex Wright, Bruise Brothers, Dan Severn, Ivan Putski.

August 1995: The Untold Truth: WrestleMania X—The Winners And Losers. Also: Johnny B. Badd, Bam Bam Bigelow, John Studd, Bubba-Sling.

October 1995 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Randy Savage, Bret & Cactus, Sting, Diesel, Hawk.

November 1995: One Defense In Four Months! Strip Hulk Hogan Of The Title—Now! Also: Alex Wright, Talanka, King of King, Chris Benoit, Backlund-Clinton.

December 1995: White With Fright, Green With Envy: Why The Undertaker Had To Bury Kama. Also: Vader-Hogan, Warrior-Renegade, Gangstas-PE, Waylon Mercy, Heavenly Bodies.

January 1996: Our Holiday Wish List For 1996! Also: ude: Scott Norton, Sid Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio, Barry Horowitz, Sabu.

February 1996: Wrestling's Top Stars: What 1996 Has In Store For Them! Also: Goldust, Sheri-Parker, Mikey Whipwreck, Smokin' Gunns.

March 1996: His Excellency! How Bret Masterminded Diesel's Execution. Also: Jeff Jarrett, Giant, Jim Cornette, Survivor Series, Eddy Guerrero.

April 1996 (Special Issue): The 1996 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Bret-Undertaker, Four Horsemen, British Bulldog, Randy Savage, Sabu.

May 1996: Ready ... Aim ... Main! The Sick Race To Cripple Shawn Michaels. Also: Shane Douglas, Arn Anderson, Jerry Lawler, Hogan-Flair.

June 1996: Luger Or Hogan? If Sting Makes The Wrong Choice, He's Through! Also: Road Warriors, Roddy Piper, Ahmed Johnson, Raven, Al Snow.

July 1996 (Special Issue): Warrior: Why He'll Save The WWF; Why He'll Sink The WWF. Also: Top stars answer personal questions, Diesel-Hogan, Dallas Page, Bret Hart.

August 1996: The Greening Of Wrestling: How Sting & Shawn Will Become \$50,000,000 Men! Also: Bodydonnas, Giant, Guerrero-Misterio, George Steele, Goldust & Marlena.

September 1996: She's No Boob! Sunny: More

Than Just Sex Appeal. Also: Lawler-Jarrett, 911, Brian Pillman, Alex Wright, championship chaos.

October 1996 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Also: Jake Roberts, Yokozuna, Giant-Konnan, Ahmed Johnson, Chris Jericho, strutters.

November 1996: The Steiners: Feasting On A Buffer Of Violence. Also: Shawn Michaels, Sabu-Douglas, King of King, Eddy Guerrero, truck stop terror.

December 1996: Three Women For Four Horsemen? The Hot Search For A Fourth Filly Has Begun! Also: Sunny & Gunns, Giant, Goldust, Cornette & Hart, Jerry Jarrett.

Holiday 1996 (Special Issue): The Tombstone: Wrestling's Deadliest Finisher. Also: 1997 calendar, "Psycho" Sid, Benoit-Misterio, Steiners-NWO, Pit Bull I, Justin Liger.

January 1997: Dreaming Of A Sunny Christmas ... Our Holiday Wish List For The Stars. Also: Michaels & Undertaker, Sting, Barry Windham, Faarooq, NWO.

February 1997: Trouble In EgoVille: Is There An NWO Within The NWO? Also: Chris Candido, Bret-Shawn, Ric Flair, Joey Styles, Liger-Benoit.

March 1997: Why Bret's Execution Will Be Excellent By WrestleMania! Also: Roddy Piper, Syxx, Survivor Series, Steve Austin, talent scouts.

April 1997 (Special Issue): The 1997 Inside Wrestling Computer Tournament. Also: Helmsley-Marlena-Sable, Nasty Boys, Flash Funk, Taz, Rick Steiner.

May 1997: Giant vs. Hogan: "Hey, Little Man, What Ya Gonna Do?" Also: Woman-Benoit-Sullivan, Shawn-Bret, Undertaker, Scott Hall, Sabu.

June 1997: Ahmed Johnson Reveals: "I Almost Joined The Nation Of Domination." Plus: Mankind, Lex Luger, NWO, Davey Boy Smith, Jerry Graham.

July 1997 (Special Issue): House Of Horrors! Fourth World Title Change In '97 ... Can The Undertaker Restore Order? Plus: Stars answer personal questions; Steve McMichael, Road Warriors, Syxx, Sandman-Lori-Tyler.

August 1997: Bret Hart Lashes Out: "You're All Responsible For What I'm About To Do!" Plus: Shawn Michaels, Chyna, Steiners, Sting, Gilbert tourney.

September 1997: The NWO's Anniversary Report. Plus: Lex Luger, Shawn-Bret, Terry Funk, Rob Van Dam, Ken Shamrock.

October 1997 (Special Issue): WCW Midyear Report. Plus: LOD-PG-13, Rob Van Dam, Flair & Horsemen, Ken Shamrock, McMichael-White, Madd & Mama Maxxine.

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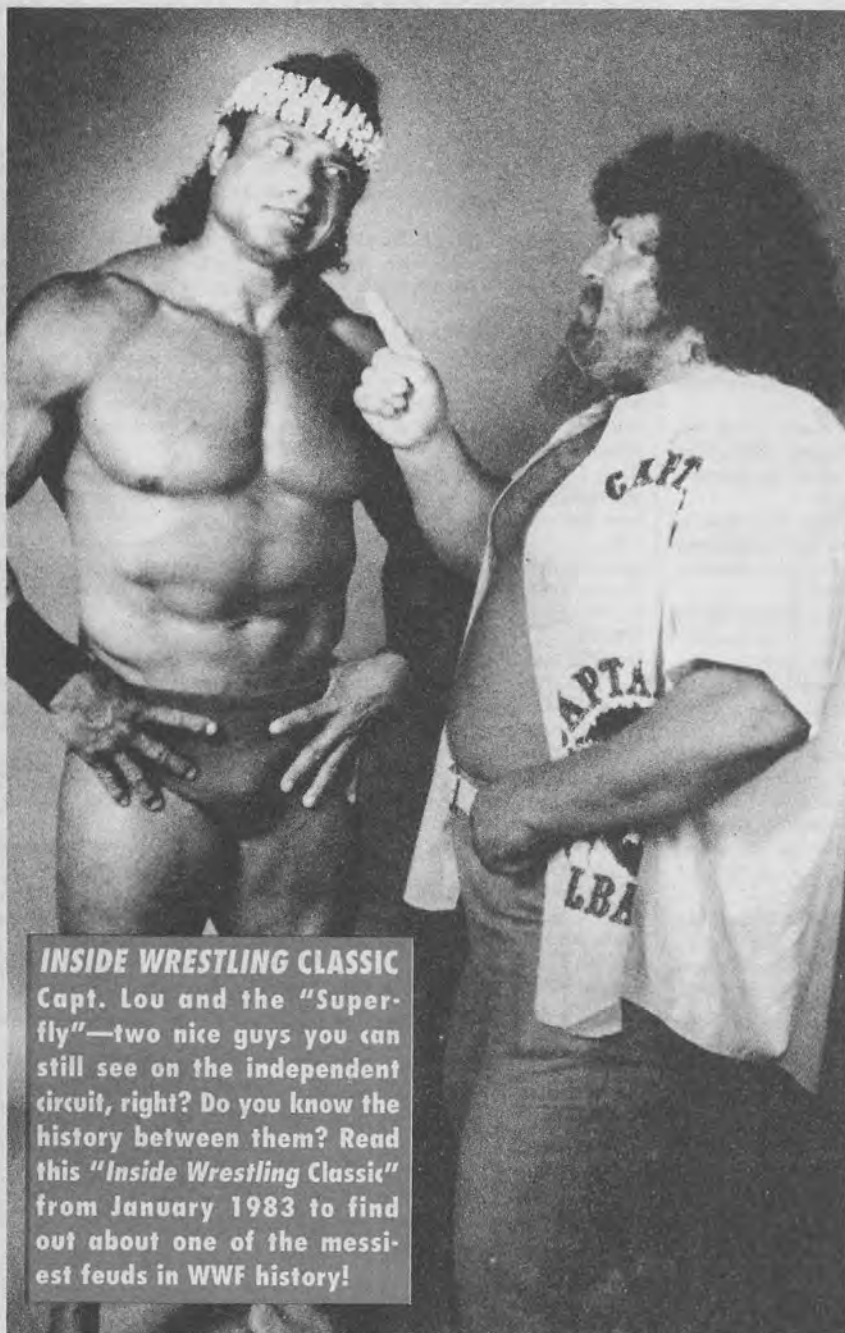
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Captain Lou Albano & Jimmy Snuka



INSIDE WRESTLING CLASSIC
Capt. Lou and the "Superfly"—two nice guys you can still see on the independent circuit, right? Do you know the history between them? Read this "Inside Wrestling Classic" from January 1983 to find out about one of the messiest feuds in WWF history!

THE SIGNALS HAVE been as clear as if a split had been announced by Captain Lou Albano himself.

● On television: Jimmy Snuka was slated to wrestle Miguel Feliciano. Before the match began, the ring announcer introduced to the crowd a celebrity on hand for the matches . . . Buddy Rogers. Coming into the ring to take a bow, the former NWA and WWF champion shook hands with the ring announcer and with Feliciano. He attempted to shake hands with Albano, who snubbed Rogers. Rogers extended his hand to Snuka. He accepted the gesture and shook hands. Albano was furious with Snuka, and began screaming at him.

● During Snuka's matches: In Snuka's most recent appearances, he has made clean breaks from his opponent when the referee signaled for him to do so. The audience cheered Snuka. Albano at ringside was furious with his man. Snuka merely glared at his manager.

● In interviews: The most startling development came in the pages of this very magazine. In the November 1982 issue of *Inside Wrestling*, we published a "Hotseat" interview with Snuka in which the Superfly made very clear his dissatisfaction with Albano. "I don't know what to do about it, brother," Snuka was quoted as saying, "but I know that I got to do something soon."

● In fan sentiment: That same issue of *Inside Wrestling* carried a column by Editor-in-Chief Peter King that called for

A PARTNERSHIP THAT WAS DOOMED FROM THE START

Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka was termed one of the most exciting wrestlers ever to enter the WWF. Captain Lou Albano was termed a genius as the man who brought him to the area. To fans and experts alike who have followed the careers of these two men, however, the association was a mismatch that was over before it had even begun



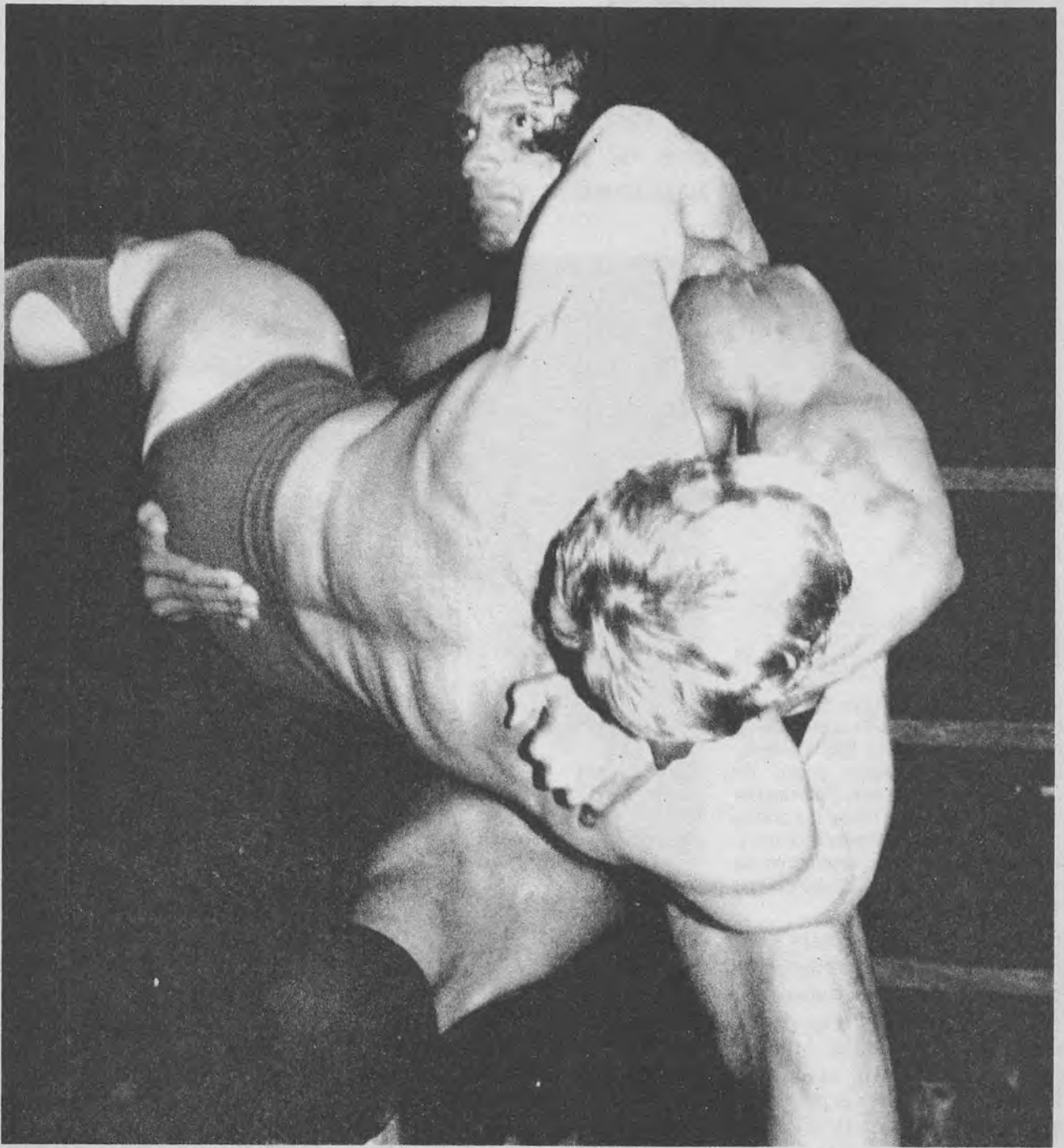
Albano instructs Snuka in the dressing room of Long Island's Nassau Coliseum on how he is to wrestle WWF champion Bob Backlund (opposite page). The Captain chose to stay away from ringside to see if Snuka would follow the plan he set for him. Snuka, however, chose to wrestle by the rulebook, headlocking the champion (above) and bodyslamming him (right).

comments from readers who feel that Snuka might be better off should he break away from Albano. The outpouring of mail was simply incredible, and you can read selected comments from fans in the article that accompanies this analysis.

What this all amounts to is an imminent split between Jimmy Snuka and Captain Lou Albano. Yet for wrestling fans who have followed the career of Snuka closely over the past years, it is a split that was fated to occur from the very moment Snuka entered the WWF and signed with Albano.

In the past, when Snuka has allied himself with a manager, it has always been someone who knew enough to realize that





Many observers believe Snuka has refused to break the rules just to show up his manager. Snuka executes a painful but clean backbreaker against Backlund (above) and locks up in a test of strength with the champion (right).

Snuka needed free reign in order to be most effective in his matches. Both Gene Anderson and Buddy Rogers managed Snuka in the Carolinas, and the Superfly chalked up a successful record in that area.

Importantly, both Rogers and Anderson allowed Snuka enough leverage in their

manager-wrestler relationships to go ahead and win matches in the way that Snuka knew he could win them. Rogers and Anderson provided advice, yes, but they certainly did not stifle Snuka's abilities.

Albano, on the other hand, has shown that he must have nearly absolute and total control

over his men, or else he might turn into a raving lunatic who throws tantrums left and right. While Albano did manage to sign several WWF title matches between Snuka and Bob Backlund, he also maintained many times that Snuka was wrong in not following his advice to the letter. Such an

Fans responded by the thousands to an appeal from Editor-in-Chief Peter King in the November issue of "Inside Wrestling" for comments regarding the situation between Jimmy Snuka and Captain Lou Albano. This is merely a small sampling of the tremendous amount of mail we received in the weeks that followed publication of that issue:

"Snuka would be better off without the management of Albano. The Captain has helped Snuka a lot in his career, but Jimmy has the ability, strength, and the body to capture the WWF title from Backlund on his own." —Ernestine Cooks, Pompano Beach, FL

"Captain Lou Albano has totally disgraced this man. Before Albano, Snuka had some dignity. Now the Captain has lowered him to the level of an uncivilized beast. Snuka should drop Albano." —Sandi Thomas, Canton, OH

There is no doubt in my mind that Jimmy Snuka would be much better off without Lou Albano." —David Barasadian, Weymouth, MA

"Although I do not particularly like Snuka, and I fume every time I see Albano, I feel that Snuka might even start to get the fans back on his side once he disposes Albano into the nearest garbage container, if there is one large enough." —Tom Fox, Buffalo, NY

"I think Jimmy Snuka would be twice the wrestler he is without that fat slob Lou Albano." —Michael Fertazzano, Brooklyn, NY

"By breaking away from Albano, Snuka could go on to be one of wrestling's true heroes, worthy of the fan praise that he already receives despite his unrelenting viciousness in the ring." —Adam Goldstein, Morganville, NJ

"I think that Snuka is the best thing that has ever happened to wrestling. I know that Albano has gotten Snuka where he is today, but I think that it's just a steppingstone for greater things to happen in the future." —Bryan Evans, Bethel Park, PA

"I believe Snuka should get away from that maniac Albano. He has enormous talent, and even though he gets a little vicious now and then, the fans still appreciate him." —John Sheldon, Crandon, WI

"Jimmy is a good man who is forced to follow the stupid orders of his insane manager." —Charla Kraus, Dayton, OH

"I think Snuka should break away from that fat, slimy, scuzball Albano. Snuka has the talent and the wrestling knowledge to make it on his own. Snuka should have a manager to handle details for him, but definitely not Albano." —A.J. Cornwall, Hicksville, NY



attitude can only create tension and trouble between a manager and his wrestler.

Furthermore, Albano apparently has taken it on himself to handle all of Snuka's money for him, placing the Superfly on a weekly allowance. (For further details about this aspect of their relationship, see Snuka's "Hotseat" interview mentioned earlier.) This too is an attitude that can only breed contempt for a manager by a wrestler.

Add to this the fact that Albano doesn't allow Snuka to speak in public, and you have the makings of a major conflict. Albano maintains that he does all this for Snuka's own good, but Snuka believes otherwise.

As of this writing, Snuka and Albano are still together, though

the situation remains tenuous at best. Once these two men go their separate ways, what's in store for each of them?

For Albano, he will no doubt turn his attention back to his tag teams. WWF champions Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito require constant attention, and there have been rumors that he might bring The Samoans back to the WWF area.

For Snuka, there are also rumors. The strongest of these maintains that he might take on Buddy Rogers as a manager and make another run for the WWF heavyweight title.

For the relationship between Albano and Snuka, however, there is no future. It was truly a situation that was doomed to failure before it had even begun. □

OFFICIAL RATINGS

TOP 15

1—BRET HART

(1) WWF World champion

2—CURT HENNIG

(5) U.S. heavyweight champion

3—THE UNDERTAKER

(3) No. 2 contender: WWF World title

4—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(2) All-Japan Triple Crown champion

5—LEX LUGER

(9) No. 2 contender: WCW World title

6—KENSUKE SASAKI

(4) IWGP heavyweight champion

7—SHANE DOUGLAS

(6) ECW heavyweight champion

8—EDDY GUERRERO

(8) WCW cruiserweight champion

9—KEN SHAMROCK

(-) No. 3 contender: WWF World title

10—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(-) No. 3 contender: WCW World title

11—TAZ

(14) ECW TV champion

12—OWEN HART

(-) WWF Intercontinental champion

13—REY MISTERIO JR.

(-) No. 6 contender: WCW World title

14—DUDE LOVE

(12) No. 4 contender: WWF World title

15—DISCO INFERNO

(-) WCW TV champion

WCW

1—HULK HOGAN

(1) 275, Venice Beach, CA

2—CURT HENNIG

(2) 235, Minneapolis, MN

3—LEX LUGER

(5) 265, Chicago, IL

4—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE

(8) 260, Tampa, FL

5—EDDY GUERRERO

(4) 221, El Paso, TX

6—CHRIS BENOIT

(15) 218, Edmonton, Alberta

7—REY MISTERIO JR.

(9) 140, San Diego, CA

8—THE GIANT

(6) 430, parts unknown

9—RANDY SAVAGE

(10) 237, Sarasota, FL

10—DISCO INFERNO

(-) 238, Brooklyn, NY

11—SCOTT HALL

(-) 290, Miami, FL

12—DEAN MALENKO

(14) 216, Tampa, FL

13—STEVE MCMICHAEL

(11) 270, Austin, TX

14—ALEX WRIGHT

(3) 222, Berlin, Germany

15—SYXX

(-) 212, Minneapolis, MN

WWF

1—BRET HART

(1) 235, Calgary, Alberta

2—OWEN HART

(9) 227, Calgary, Alberta

3—THE UNDERTAKER

(2) 328, parts unknown

4—KEN SHAMROCK

(5) 235, San Bernardino, CA

5—DUDE LOVE

(3) 277, Truth or Consequences, NM

6—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY

(11) 279, Greenwich, CT

7—THE PATRIOT

(4) 251, Columbia, SC

8—SHAWN MICHAELS

(10) 234, San Antonio, TX

9—GOLDUST

(8) 254, Austin, TX

10—BIG VAN VADER

(6) 450, Denver, CO

11—AHMED JOHNSON

(-) 305, Pearl River, MS

12—MARC MERO

(-) 235, Buffalo, NY

13—FAAROOQ

(14) 291, Perry, GA

14—JIM NEIDHART

(-) 275, Tampa, FL

15—SAVIO VEGA

(13) 260, Vega Alta, Puerto Rico

ECW

1—SHANE DOUGLAS

(1) 240, Pittsburgh, PA

2—TAZ

(2) 248, Red Hook, NY

3—SABU

(5) 220, Bombay

4—BAM BAM BIGELOW

(7) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ

5—CHRIS CANDIDO

(6) 226, Carteret, NJ

6—AL SNOW

(13) 232, Lima, OH

7—TOMMY DREAMER

(4) 245, Yonkers, NY

8—ROB VAN DAM

(9) 227, Battle Creek, MI

9—MIKEY WHIPWRECK

(15) 187, New York, NY

10—TRACEY SMOTHERS

(14) 227, Atlanta, GA

11—B. MAHONEY

(12) 361, Carteret, NJ

12—SPIKE DUDLEY

(8) 155, parts unknown

13—AXL ROTTEN

(10) 302, Philadelphia, PA

14—JUSTIN CREDIBLE

(-) 225, Waterbury, CT

15—CHRIS CHETTI

(-) 227, Amityville, NY

INTERNATIONAL

1—MITSU HARU MISAWA

(1) 228, Ashikaga, Japan

2—KENSUKE SASAKI

(2) 233, Tokyo, Japan

3—KONNAN

(5) 237, Mexico City, Mexico

4—KEIJI MUTO

(7) 245, Yamanashi, Japan

5—KENTA KOBASHI

(12) 261, Fukuchiyama, Japan

6—SHINYA HASHIMOTO

(3) 287, Gifu, Japan

7—JUSHIN LIGER

(6) 206, Hiroshima, Japan

8—REY MISTERIO JR.

(11) 140, San Diego, CA

9—ULTIMO DRAGON

(4) 175, Nagoya, Japan

10—STAN HANSEN

(-) 322, Borger, TX

11—STEELE

(9) 250, Winnipeg, Manitoba

12—PSICOSIS

(8) 200, Tijuana, Mexico

13—MASA CHONO

(-) 235, Tokyo, Japan

14—HIROYOSHI TENZAN

(10) 270, Tokyo, Japan

15—JUVENTUD GUERRERA

(13) 165, Mexico City, Mexico

TOP 15 TAG TEAMS

1—THE ROAD WARRIORS

(4) WWF World tag team champions

2—RICK & SCOTT STEINER

(3) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title

3—THE GIANT & LEX LUGER

(-) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title

4—HENRY & PHINEAS GODWINN

(7) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title

5—JOHN KRONUS & NEW JACK

(10) ECW tag team champions

6—THE HEADBANGERS

(1) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title

7—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH

(11) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

8—MARCUS BAGWELL & SCOTT NORTON

(13) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title

9—BUH BUH RAY & D-VON DUDLEY

(6) No. 1 contenders: ECW tag title

10—THE PATRIOT & BIG VAN VADER

(-) No. 4 contenders: WWF World tag title

11—MIGUEL PEREZ & SAVIO VEGA

(-) No. 5 contenders: WWF World tag title

12—THE BARBARIAN & MENG

(-) No. 4 contenders: WCW World tag title

13—ROCKY MAIVIA & KAMA MUSTAFA

(-) No. 6 contenders: WWF World tag title

14—CHRIS BENOIT & STEVE MCMICHAEL

(-) No. 5 contenders: WCW World tag title

15—DOUG FURNAS & PHIL LAFON

(-) No. 2 contenders: ECW tag title

These ratings are compiled by the editors with the assistance of promoters, wrestlers, and reporters around the country, and are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue... Championships highlighted in bold on the "Roll Call Of Champions" have changed hands since our previous issue ... The information under the championship listing indicates the date that champion won the title, who the former champion was, and where the match took place.

For period ended October 11, 1997

ROLL CALL OF CHAMPIONS

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
JOHNNY ACE & KENTA KOBASHI
(October 4, 1997; from Gary Albright & Steve Williams; Nagoya, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN UNITED NATIONAL CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S ALL-PACIFIC CHAMPION: TOMOKO WATANABE
(August 22, 1997; from Kaoru Ito; Osaka, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S CHAMPION: RIE TAMADA
(November 21, 1996; from Kumiko Maekawa; Kobe, Japan)

ALL-JAPAN WOMEN'S TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: CHIKAYA NAGASHIMA & SUGAR SATO
(September 1, 1996; from Yumi Fukawa & Rie Tamada; Tokyo, Japan)

CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: TITLE VACANT
(Most recently held by Kevin Sullivan)

ECW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: SHANE DOUGLAS
(August 17, 1997; beat Sabu and Terry Funk in three-way match; Fort Lauderdale, FL)

ECW TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: JOHN KRONUS & NEW JACK
(September 20, 1997; from Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley; Philadelphia, PA)

ECW TELEVISION CHAMPION: TAZ
(June 7, 1997; from Shane Douglas; Philadelphia, PA)

IWGP JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: HIROYOSHI TENZAN
(August 10, 1997; from El Samurai; Nagoya, Japan)

IWGP HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: KENSUKE SASAKI
(August 31, 1997; from Shinya Hashimoto; Yokohama, Japan)

IWGP INTERNATIONAL TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
KENSUKE SASAKI & KAZUO YAMAZAKI
(August 10, 1997; from Satoshi Kojima & Manabu Nakanishi; Nagoya, Japan)

IPWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: BIG SLAM
(January 11, 1997; beat Guido Falcone; Pikeville, NC)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE: PIT BULL II
(August 10, 1997; from Knuckles Zandwich; Baltimore, MD)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
ADAM FLASH
(March 2, 1997; beat Steve Corino & Quinn Nash in three-way match; Baltimore, MD)

MID-EASTERN WRESTLING FEDERATION MID-ATLANTIC CHAMPION: QUINN NASH
(June 1, 1997; from Jimmy Cicero; Baltimore, MD)

NWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DAN SEVERN
(February 24, 1995; from Chris Candido; Erlanger, KY)

NWA NORTH AMERICAN HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: RECKLESS YOUTH
(June 14, 1997; from Ace Darling; Vineland, NJ)

NWA U.S. TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE MISFITS
(June 14, 1997; from The Beach Burns; Vineland, NJ)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MITSU HARU MISAWA
(January 20, 1997; from Kenta Kobashi; Osaka, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
MAUNUKEA MOSSMAN
(August 22, 1997; from Yoshinari Ogawa; Tokyo, Japan)

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
JOHNNY ACE & KENTA KOBASHI
(October 4, 1997; from Gary Albright & Steve Williams; Nagoya, Japan)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
CHEETAH MASTER
(April 4, 1997; from Julio Sanchez; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION:
JOE RULES
(September 26, 1997; won battle royal; Reading, PA)

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
COL. JIHAD HUSSEIN & DAVE PATERA
(September 26, 1997; from Mike Quackenbush & Pat Shamrock; Reading, PA)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: GEORGE SOUTH
(July 12, 1997; from Italian Stallion; Gaffney, SC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION JUNIOR HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: MADD MAXXINE
(August 24, 1996; beat Black Angel; Forest City, NC)

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS:
TERRY AUSTIN & BLACK ANGEL
(October 4, 1997; from Chris Hamrick & Ripper; Gaffney, SC)

USWA HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION: DUTCH MANTEL
(August 8, 1997; from Jerry Lawler; Memphis, TN)

USWA SOUTHERN CHAMPION: STEVEN DUNN
(September 6, 1997; from Doomsday; Memphis, TN)

USWA TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: PG-13
(August 31, 1997; from Steven Dunn & Flash Flanagan; Memphis, TN)

WCW CRUISERWEIGHT CHAMPION: EDDY GUERRERO
(September 14, 1997; from Chris Jericho; Winston-Salem, NC)

WCW TELEVISION CHAMPION: DISCO INFERNO
(September 22, 1997; from Alex Wright; Salt Lake City, UT)

WCW U.S. CHAMPION: CURT HENNIG
(September 15, 1997; from Steve McMichael; Charlotte, NC)

WCW WORLD CHAMPION: HULK HOGAN
(August 9, 1997; from Lex Luger; Sturgis, SD)

WCW WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH
(October 27, 1996; from Harlem Heat; Las Vegas, NV)

WWF EUROPEAN CHAMPION: SHAWN MICHAELS
(September 20, 1997; from Davey Boy Smith; Birmingham, England)

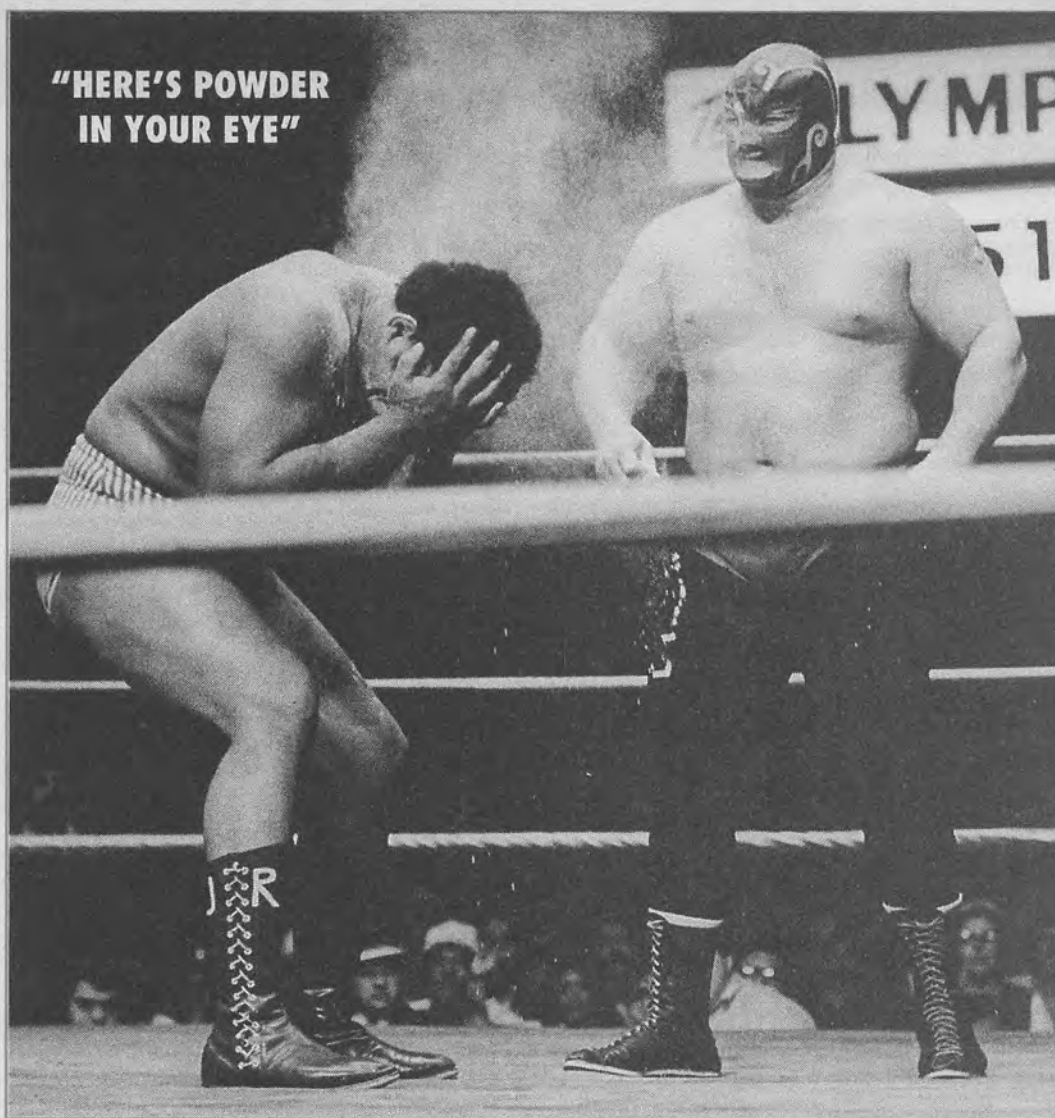
WWF INTERCONTINENTAL CHAMPION: OWEN HART
(October 5, 1997; beat Faarooq in tournament final; St. Louis, MO)

WWF WORLD CHAMPION: BRET HART
(August 3, 1997; from The Undertaker; East Rutherford, NJ)

WWF WORLD TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS: THE ROAD WARRIORS
(October 7, 1997; beat Henry & Phineas Godwinn; Topeka, KS)

BLAST FROM THE PAST

This Month In Wrestling History



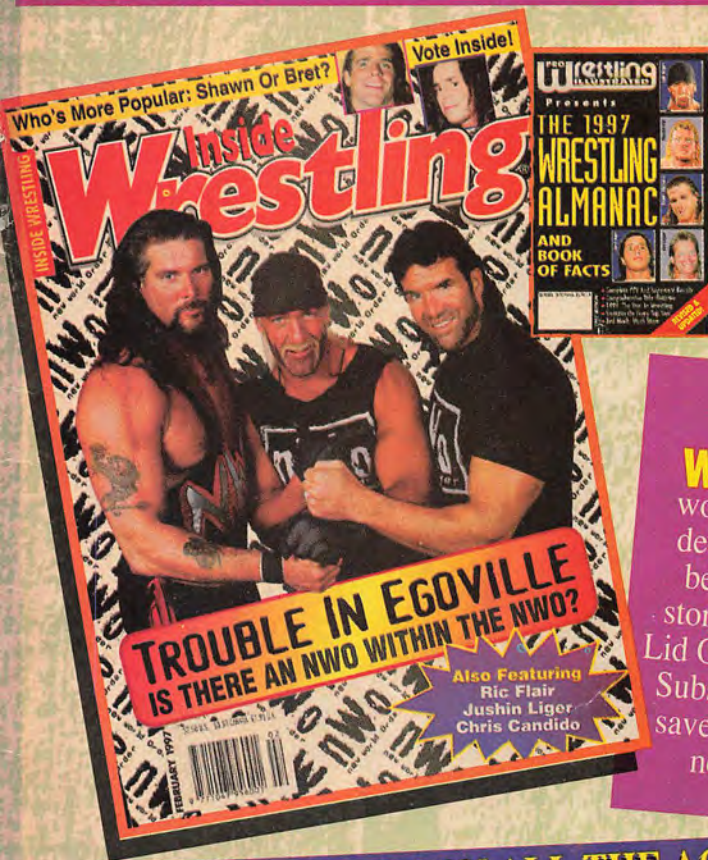
BATTLE ROYAL

ROCKY JOHNSON vs. DOUG "THE PRO" GILBERT

January 1971

That fistful of powder that "The Pro" threw turned out to be worth about \$11,000. That's how much money he received for winning this prestigious 22-man battle royal in Los Angeles. After more than one hour of action, only "Soulman" Rocky, the father of current WWF star Rocky Maivia, and the masked man remained in the ring. Gilbert must have felt he was overmatched, because he didn't wait long before resorting to this dirty trick. And once Johnson was temporarily blinded, it wasn't long before he was eliminated.

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